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Entertainment Weekly

#957 • OCT. 5, 2007

Things are bigger and better than ever between Michael (Steve Carell) and the newly enhanced Jan (Melora Hardin)

The Office

The NBC Hit Reopens For Business—And Some Hot Awkward Love!

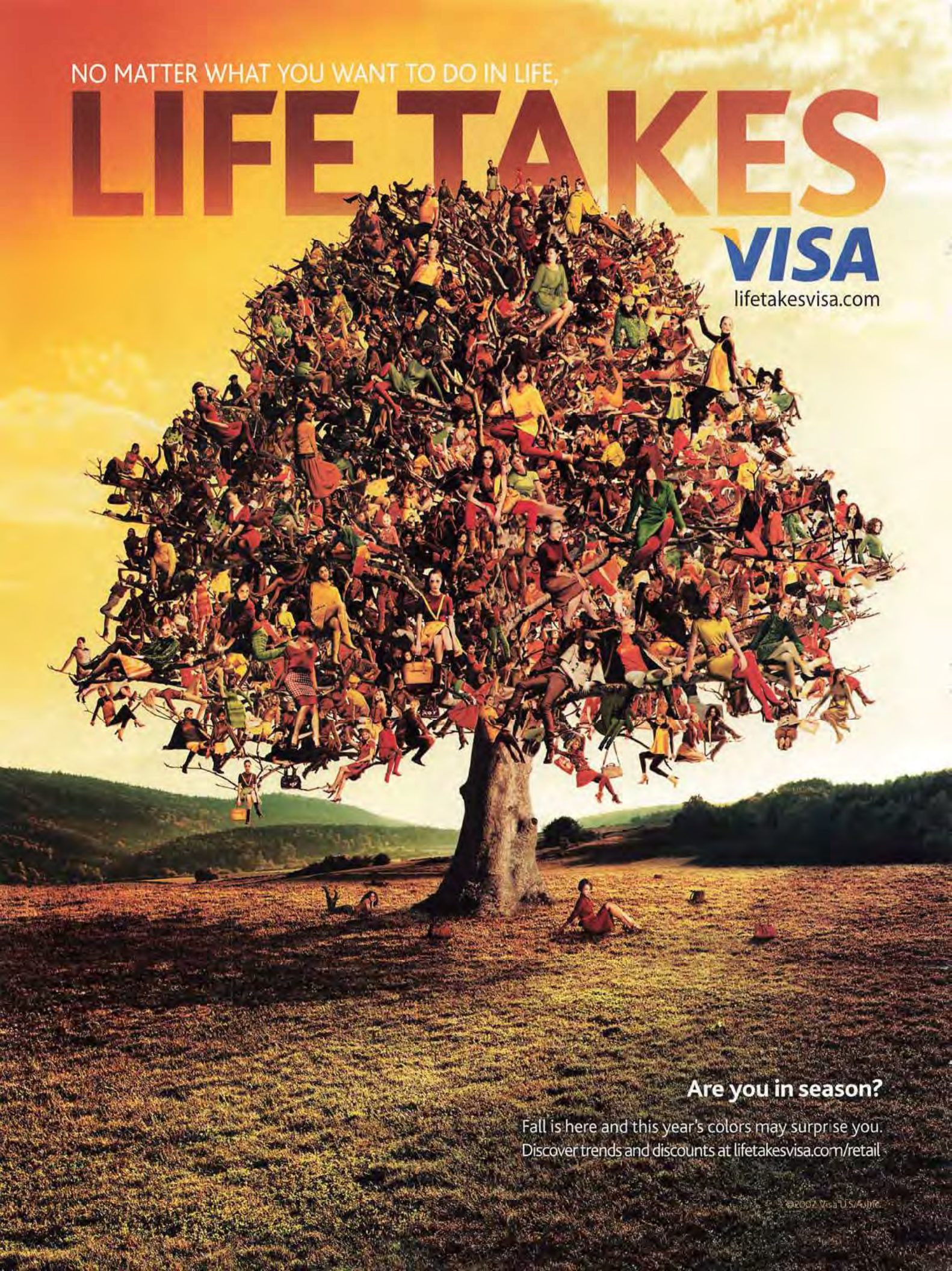
Project Runway

Exclusive: A First Look at The New Season

Geek Treat

At Last! Batman & Superman Together On the Big Screen

Three Bonus Covers Inside!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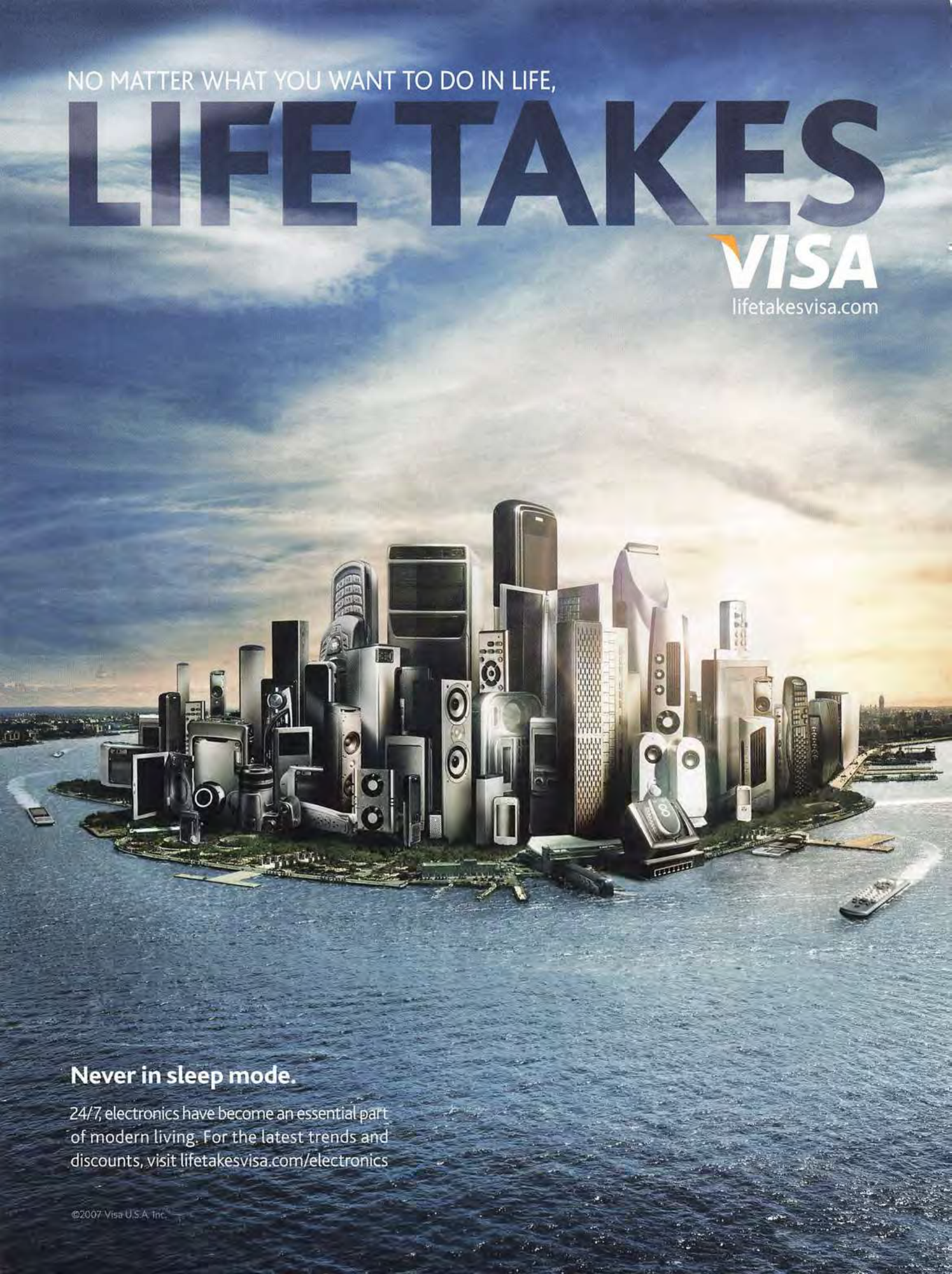
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#957 • OCTOBER 5, 2007

Jim (John Krasinski) and Pam (Jenna Fischer) pretend not to notice that their hands are sweaty

The Office

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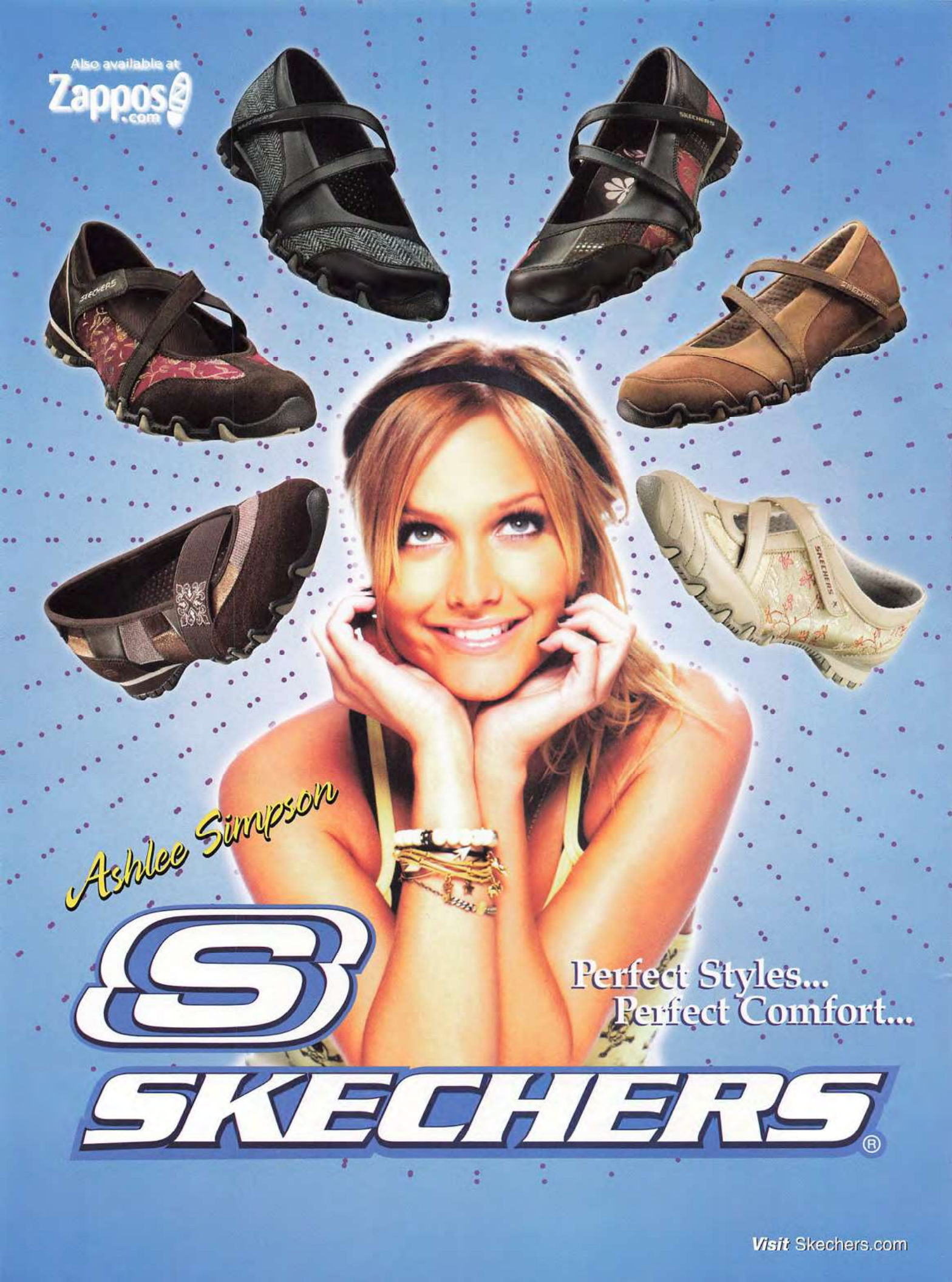
Entertainment Weekly

Ryan (B.J. Novak) and Kelly (Mindy Kaling) find their relationship under the gun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Sarah Jessica Parker films a scene for 'Sex and the City: The Movie' on Sept. 21, 2007, in New York City

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BONUS COVERS

The cast of *The Office* photographed for EW by Art Streiber on Aug. 27, 2007, in Los Angeles

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Feedback

"The true TV geek in me comes out with this issue. I chart out each night to make sure my DVR can handle it."

Danielle Fornes
Portland, Maine

Inner Tube

I really enjoyed the Fall TV Preview. I can only hope that you guys do an even better job when about 80 percent of those shows get canceled and we've got to know which midseason replacements to watch.

Jhanet Leanore
East Windsor, N.J.

Much as I did on every episode of *The Love Boat*, I found a lot of dramedy in your great article about the show ("*The Love Boat* 30th Anniversary: A Look Back"). I was so excited by the prospect of one more voyage—as in 1977, cheese is delicious!

Jon Bargdill
Springboro, Ohio

I'm looking forward to *Reaper* and think Bret Harrison is very talented, but I take issue with his quote "Comedy, drama, horror, action—I hadn't seen anything like this on TV, so I didn't really have anything to relate it to." Might I suggest he watch The CW's own *Supernatural* to see it done right?

Wendy Walega
Bessemer City, N.C.

How did you miss the similarity between *Samantha Who?* and *Overboard* with Goldie Hawn? The concept is a direct lift: Goldie was bad. She suffered amnesia. She became good.

Stu Gray
Manhasset Hills, N.Y.

Credit Is 'Due'

For those of us who didn't watch *Walker, Texas Ranger*, Paul Haggis' most enduring TV work is without a doubt *Due South* (Movies).

Susan Parker
Vinton, Iowa

Missing in Action

Thanks to Dalton Ross for stating that the best dramas were criminally neglected by the Emmys (The Glutton). I don't see how the winners can consider themselves *real* winners, since they didn't compete with *Friday Night Lights*, *The Shield*, or *The Wire*.

Doug Kelsey
Mason, Ohio

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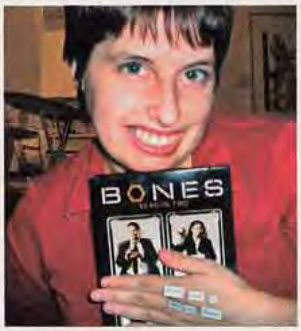

OBSESSIVE FAN OF THE WEEK!

Toronto native Lindsey Patten has been watching *Bones* for less than a year, but she's already written enough fan fiction to fill a book—a 280,000-word book, to be exact. "My family thinks I'm a little weird," says Patten, who also runs a message board dedicated to the show and plays with *Bones* magnetic poetry. "But hey, I just go where the creativity flows." Maybe Dr. Brennan should embrace that attitude...

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Five Fun Things Online

1. The Ultimate Hottie
Who's the hottest entertainer of all time? Our multiweek contest will pit current stars like Angelina Jolie (above) against icons past, so log on to help pick the winner.

2. Probst Recommends *What?*
In Take 5, our daily list of pop diversions, *Survivor* host Jeff Probst (right) picks his top five Hall & Oates videos, lending new meaning to "Time to head back to camp!"

3. More Great TV
Log on to discuss the latest episode of *House* (left), *America's Next Top Model*, and your other fave shows.

4. 'Carpoolers' Diary Exclusive
If you've been a Bruce McCulloch fan since his *Kids in the Hall* days, don't miss the *Carpoolers* creator's exclusive diary about his new series.

5. More Sci-Fi
For complete coverage of *Heroes* (right), *Star Trek*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and much, much more, beam yourself up to the special Sci-Fi Central hub on EW.com.

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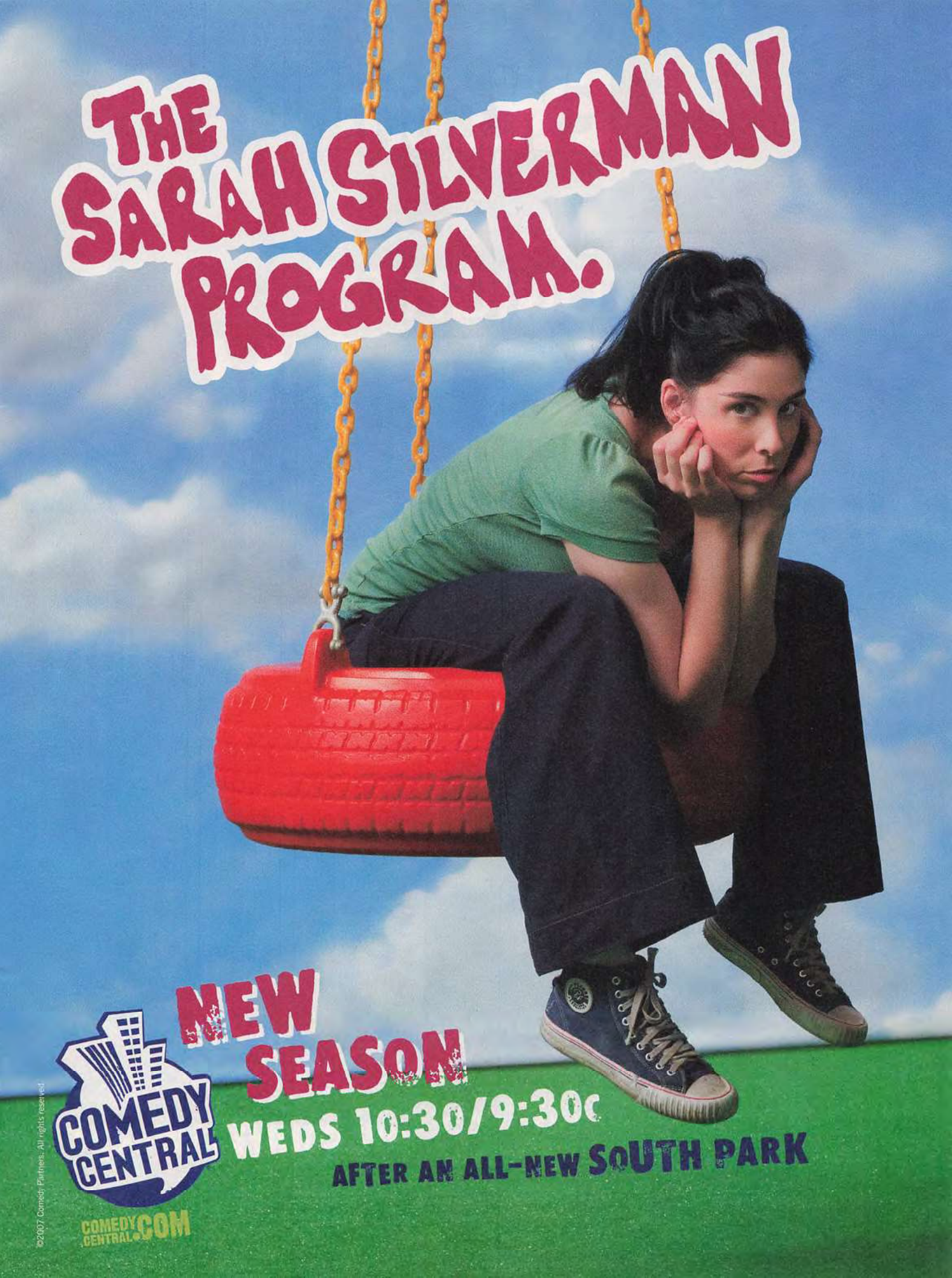
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NEWS+NOTES

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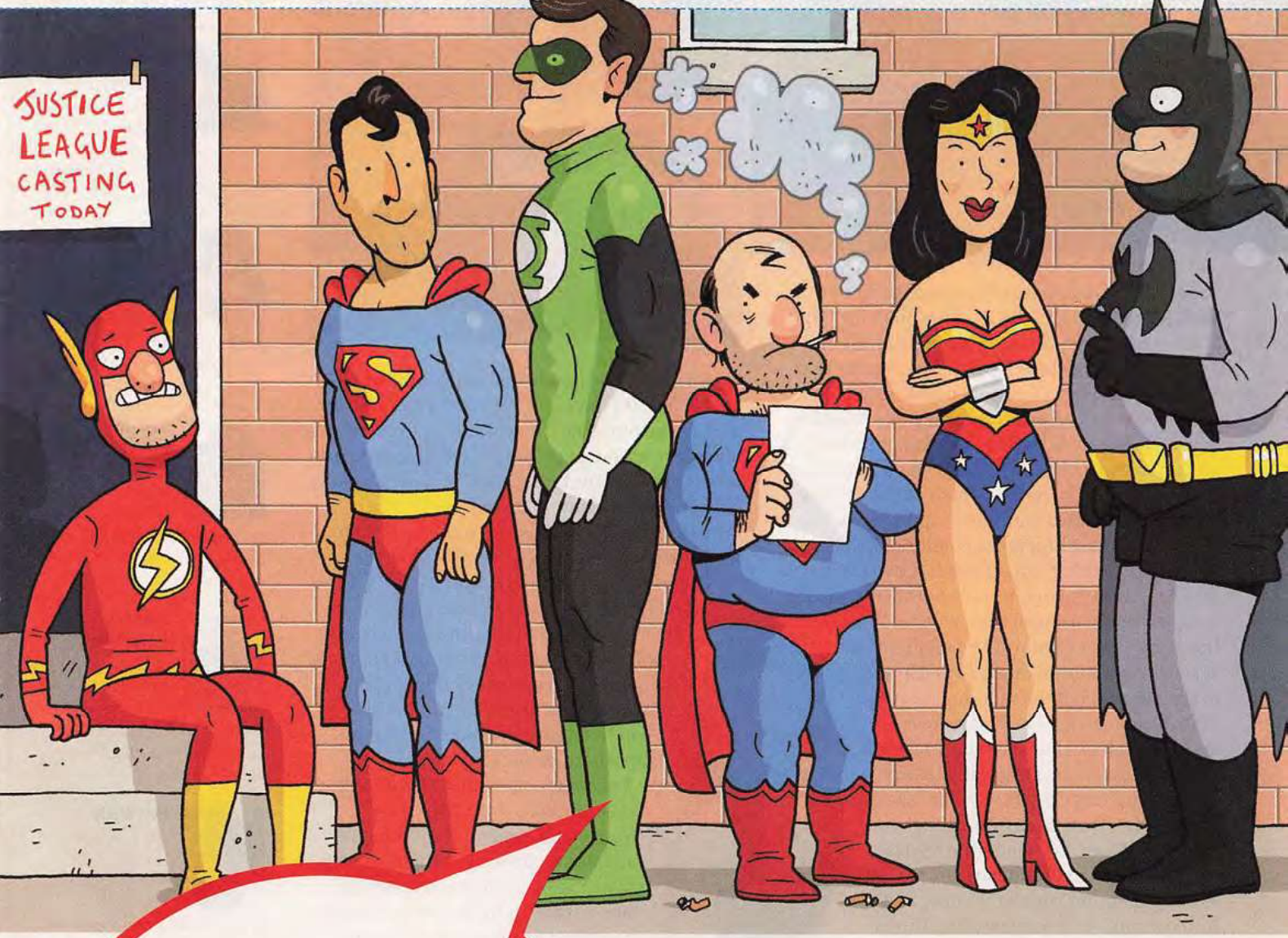

'Justice' Is Served

EW has the scoop on the big-screen superhero spectacular *Justice League of America*

BY NICOLE SPERLING

Holy blockbuster, Batman! Geeks everywhere are aflutter over the news that the Caped Crusader and his superhero cohorts Superman and Wonder Woman are finally flying to the big screen together in a live-action film version of the comic-book classic *Justice League of America*. "Except for *The Watchmen* and *Dark Knight*, nothing is causing more nerd excitement than *Justice League*," says comic-book writer Brad Meltzer, who relaunched the franchise for DC Comics last year. "Like *X-Men*, this is the comic-book creator's crown jewel."

Though the studio will still not officially confirm it, Warner Bros.' *League* feature is scheduled to begin production in Australia next February under *Happy Feet* director George Miller. But some Hollywood power players aren't taking it too well, given that the movie could hinder future plans for DC Comics film franchises, including the ongoing Batman and Superman

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT GARRETT

Bale in 2005's *Batman Begins* and Routh in 2006's *Superman Returns*; (below) Biel

series, and long-gestating theatrical takes on Wonder Woman and the Flash. Sources say that Warner Bros. was prompted to move quickly on *Justice League* by three factors: a screenplay that "they flipped out over"; an open spot in their summer 2009 calendar; and the increasing probability of an industry-wide strike that would shut down all productions by next July. EW has obtained an early version of the script—which was written by Kieran and Michele Mulroney—and what we've seen remains faithful to the comic book that first appeared in 1960. (Stop reading if you're spoiler-phobic.) All seven original members of the Justice League—Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, the Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman, and the Martian Manhunter—are featured in an origins story about the superhero conglomerate (see sidebar). The plot revolves around villainous businessman Maxwell Lord and involves cyborgs called OMACs (One-Man Army Corps), who can take over humans and turn them into killing machines. There are epic battle scenes between Superman and Batman, as well as Superman and Wonder Woman, and *League* could spawn a slew of additional franchises if it's successful.

But what about the existing franchises? Christian Bale is not expected to star as *League*'s Batman, and many in Hollywood are wondering whether this continuity breach will distract audiences who turn out for *Knight* next July. Director Christopher Nolan is reportedly unhappy that the studio is making *League*. (Nolan is currently "knee-deep" in production and unavailable for comment, according to his reps.) Sources close to director Bryan Singer say he had to be reassured that *Superman: Man of Steel* wouldn't be affected. (The film is still in development, and Singer has the option to bow out if the script is not up to par.) And while Brandon Routh has said he would gladly reprise his role as the Man of Steel for *League*, it's not clear if Warner Bros. wants him for the film. The studio declined to comment for this story, but according to one source familiar with their plans for *League*, "Warner doesn't believe they are cannibalizing [these other franchises] partly because it's unlikely Brandon and Christian will be in it. They believe the movies can live in parallel universes." Whether *Justice* will jump-start or derail the Wonder Woman and Flash films is unclear. Sources say that concerns about hurting individual franchises are what kept Warner Bros. president and COO Alan Horn from greenlighting a multi-superhero movie for years.

Insiders confirm that Jessica Biel is in early talks to play Wonder Woman in *League*, but as with Bale and Routh, the studio might be wary of a crossover; one source says that her contract is unlikely to guarantee that she'd be the star of any future Wonder Woman feature. (Biel's reps declined to comment.) And a Flash movie, which *Night at the Museum* director Shawn Levy was last attached to direct, now seems to be on hold. But the Flash may not have to put off his solo project for *too* long. Says one studio insider, "I don't think you can cannibalize superheroes. The audience has an insatiable appetite for them right now." And nothing will whet that appetite more than seeing seven of them bounding across the big screen all at once. ■

>EW.COM Who do you think should don Batman's cape, Green Lantern's tights, and Aquaman's scales? Go to *popwatch.ew.com* to cast the entire Justice League.

'LEAGUE' SNEAK PEEK

EW caught an early glimpse of the *Justice League* script. Below, a (mostly) spoiler-free first look. —*NS*

SUPERMAN
A.k.a. Clark Kent, news reporter. The morally upstanding Man of Steel battles Batman and has more to worry about than Kryptonite.

WONDER WOMAN
A.k.a. Diana of Themyscira, Amazonian princess. Revered by the other supers for her beauty and ass-kicking abilities.

THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER
A.k.a. J'onn J'onzz, detective. His power to read minds comes in handy as the villain engages in some nifty mind control.

GREEN LANTERN
A.k.a. John Stewart, architect. Designed the Hall of Justice. His emerald power ring shoots beams of energy.

BATMAN
A.k.a. Bruce Wayne. The most human of the bunch is mistrustful of others, which leads to quite a few problems for the clan.

FLASH
A.k.a. Barry Allen, cop. The most enthusiastic superhero, Flash is happy just to be included, but his ravenous appetite leads to trouble.

AQUAMAN
A.k.a. Arthur, the Atlantean king. Not a fan of humans, Aquaman is more interested in helping his fellow heroes than lending a hand to land dwellers.

BATMAN BEGINS: WARNER BROS. SUPERMAN RETURNS: SONY PICTURES IMAGEWORKS. BIEL: CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP. SUPERMAN, WONDER WOMAN, THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER, GREEN LANTERN, BATMAN, FLASH: © WARNER BROS/EVERETT COLLECTION; AQUAMAN: © DC COMICS/EVERETT COLLECTION

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Davis, Parker, Nixon, and Cattrall on location in NYC Sept. 21

'City' Girls on Film

EW reports from the set of *Sex and the City: The Movie*, now shooting in New York. **BY HENRY GOLDBLATT**

A glammed-up Parker spotted on the 'SATC' set Sept. 21

It's week one on the set of the *Sex and the City* movie, and already a fight is breaking out. On the Upper East Side of Manhattan, a young, dark-haired woman is screaming at her male companion: "Go back to your wife. How can you do that to me? You're *married*?!?" As she berates the cheating SOB, another woman with a bit more "life experience" notices the melee and glances back, but decides to move on. For once, Carrie Bradshaw (Sarah Jessica Parker) is just the witness to a public verbal smackdown instead of a participant; as she might type on her laptop, *I couldn't help but wonder: Do we ever grow up—or just grow older?*

New Line's *Sex and the City: The Movie* is shooting all over town in preparation for its release on May 30, 2008, and though the set is closed, EW dispatched some reporters to observe from the sidelines. Three years after the HBO series' finale, the ladies haven't abandoned their gals-about-town lifestyle: EW caught Carrie, Samantha (Kim Cattrall), Charlotte (Kristin Davis), and Miranda (Cynthia Nixon) meeting for lunch outside of Christie's Auction House, while a building across from a Ferrari dealership on Park Avenue was transformed (not too successfully) into a nightclub.

Yeah, yeah, yeah—let's get to the good stuff: What are they wearing? Bright colors, such as a canary blazer for Samantha, dominate along with floral prints. Designer Patricia Field, who outfitted the quartet during *Sex*'s six years, seems to be sticking with her strategy of shock and awe. Carrie carries a brown spotted, feathered purse that no animal—fake or real—deserves to die for, but the shimmery silver mini we saw her working was killer. *(Reported by Archana Ram and Lindsay Soll)*

HIT LIST

By Scott Brown

1 **Crash won't stop Clooney from riding his motorcycle** *He's just removing the mirrors, so they won't distract him again.*

2 ***Die Hard* director sentenced to prison** *"Stay with me," the judge pitched. "It's 'Die Hard'... in a prison! With the director of 'Die Hard'!"*

3 **Six of the seven gay characters on network TV are on ABC** *The seventh, Bashful, is thinking of becoming a cable news anchor.*

4 **Mariah Carey says her secret to looking good is "bleak diets"** *It's all in Charles Dickens' weight-loss classic, 'Bleak Diets.'*

5 **Armani teaming with Samsung** *Nearing fruition: Man's great dream of pants that can store an entire season of 'Battlestar.'*

6 **No lesbian affair with Jan in Marcia Brady tell-all** *That sound you hear is thousands of fan-fiction writers cursing the rumor mill.*

7 **Phil Spector jury requests a VCR** *Sorry, but 'C.H.U.D.' just isn't the same on DVD.*

8 **Scary Spice "terrorizes" her family "with kisses"** *At some point, she'll release a video claiming responsibility.*

9 **Actor playing "Dancing Russian Soldier" spills *Indy 4* plot** *That's what you get when you hire Blabby Baryshnikov.*

10 **VH1 introduces celebrity-rehab reality show** *They'll be rehabilitating former reality-show stars looking to reenter a camera-free life.*

For all the latest headlines, pictures, and ridiculous Hollywood miscellany, visit popwatch.ew.com

SEX AND THE CITY: THE MOVIE: JAMES DEVANEY/WIRELIMAGE.COM (2); CAREY: EVAN AGOSTINI/AP PHOTO; SCARY SPICE: JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC.COM

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DEAL REPORT

MOVIES

+ Brad Pitt will step into the ring alongside Mark Wahlberg as famed Boston slugger Dicky Eklund in the boxing drama *The Fighter*. (Matt Damon was originally

PITT

cast but bowed out due to scheduling conflicts.) Recasting with Pitt, says producer Todd Lieberman, was easy: "He's got the great mix of boyish charm and rugged manliness."

+ *The Kingdom* star Jennifer Garner is going from current events to classic lit for her next role as Matthew McConaughey's love interest in *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past*, a rom-com riff on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. "She's so sharp-witted, deadpan, and level-headed," gushes director Mark Waters (*Mean Girls*) of Garner. "She's the only one who's able to call McConaughey's character on his BS and see him as he truly is."

WASHINGTON

+ Denzel Washington and director Tony Scott, who previously collaborated on *Déjà Vu* and *Crimson Tide*, will reteam for a modern-day remake of the 1974 NYC subway-hijacking thriller *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three*.
—*Tanner Stransky*

Jennifer Garner, Ali Suliman, Jamie Foxx, and Chris Cooper in *The Kingdom*

Combat Zoning

Location scouts are forced to get creative now that Hollywood is making movies about Iraq and the war-torn Middle East. **BY YOUYOUNG LEE**

Getting a studio to greenlight a movie about the Middle East is hard. Finding a safe place to film it can be even trickier. Says Steve Saeta, exec producer of the military thriller *The Kingdom*, "My crew looked at me and said, 'Are you out of your mind? You're taking us to the Middle East?'" Here's how four big fall features about the volatile region tackled their biggest challenge: location, location, location.

THE KINGDOM Filmed in United Arab Emirates
The glossy, tourist-friendly city of Dubai was the first choice for this movie about an FBI team in Saudi Arabia, which was out of the question for insurance and safety reasons. But Saeta says that access was denied because "[Dubai officials] seemed to be unhappy with how they were portrayed" in 2005's *Syriana*, which was filmed there. So producers settled on the capital city of Abu Dhabi, where unmarked military guards helped them feel "totally safe."

REDACTED Filmed in Jordan
Director Brian De Palma says choosing Jordan to fill in for Iraq in this drama about the rape and murder of a 15-year-old Iraqi girl by U.S. soldiers was simple: "The terrain is very similar to Iraq—plus they have close to a million Iraqi refugees there. All the Arabs in my movie are Iraqis."

RENDITION and IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH Filmed in Morocco
After being denied insurance clearance to film in Egypt because of its close proximity to Iraq, *Rendition* director Gavin Hood relocated the setting of his CIA-themed drama to an unnamed North African country, and assembled a crew in Morocco of nearly 1,000 extras from Israel, Algeria, and Egypt—"for some of whom," he says, "making this film carries potential risks." Director Paul Haggis also went to Morocco for *Elah*'s Iraq-set flashbacks, but tells EW that he actually considered filming in the war-torn country itself, but only "for a second."

The Shaw Report *By Jessica Shaw*

IN	FIVE MINUTES AGO	OUT
Opera gloves	*Fingerless gloves*	*Mittens*
Buying a castle	*Buying an island*	*Buying a vineyard*
Life coaches	*Self-help books*	*Shrinks*

PITT: JOHN SPELLMAN/RETNA; WASHINGTON: JOHN RIGAUD/RETNA; *THE KINGDOM*: FRANK CONNOR

All Fall Downloads

As the networks scramble for online eyeballs, NBC announces a new download service, while CBS and Fox buddy up to iTunes. **BY LINDSAY SOLL**

NBC wants viewers to know that there *is* life after iTunes. On Sept. 19, three weeks after an acrimonious split from Apple, the Peacock announced that viewers can now download Hiro, Chuck, and company for free through its new service, NBC Direct, starting next month. Says JB Perrette, the network's president of digital distribution, "It's about extending NBC.com's reach to an audience that doesn't want to have to be attached to a broadband connection."

Shows downloaded from NBC Direct include commercials that can't be fast-forwarded, and you'll have just one week after an episode is broadcast to download and view it. After that, the file will—poof!—degrade. The site only works with Windows-based computers, meaning Mac users and those who like to take their TV to go on iPods or Zune players are out of luck. NBC says it's exploring ways to make NBC Direct compatible with those devices, but for now the network isn't worried about the portability issue. (Owners of lesser-known players like the Zen Vision can still use Amazon's Unbox to watch shows.) Explains Perrette, "We've found the majority of downloaded content is still viewed on a PC or laptop."

Zachary Levi from NBC's *Chuck*

As the Peacock makes non-iTunes plans, other networks are getting cozier with the service. On Sept. 21, CBS announced that it has finally reached an agreement with 20th Century Fox to make episodes of CBS' *How I Met Your Mother* available on iTunes, while Fox announced that it will offer all of its fall premieres for free on Apple's store for two weeks. It's too early to tell how these decisions will affect ratings, but it's clear that the networks are desperate to conquer the cyber-frontier. "There are so many more opportunities," says 20th Century Fox Television chairman Gary Newman. "We're all still trying to figure out how to maximize the value of the digital platform." Welcome to 2007, you guys!

WHAT'S UP WITH HULU?

The NBC Direct news has us wondering what's going on with Hulu, the NBC–News Corp. video website that was announced with much fanfare in March. Spokesperson Christina Lee clears things up (sorta).

EW When's the launch date?

CHRISTINA LEE In October, but we haven't announced a specific date.

EW Which shows will be available?

CL At launch, we'll have shows from Fox and NBC.

EW Will streaming and downloads be available?

CL It will be streaming at launch. [Downloading] is certainly something we'll consider.

EW What will it cost?

CL It will be an ad-funded service, so everything will be free to the viewer.

THE ABSURD-O-METER: '24' EDITION

If '24' were a talk-show host, its name would be Absurdio Hall. Fox announced that in yet another inconceivable plot twist, felled CTU agent Tony Almeida (Carlos Bernard) will return from the dead in season 7 (premiering Jan. 13). Yeah, it's time to rate some of our favorite day-saving drama's more fantastic *moments.* —Dan Snierson

Kiefer Sutherland

THAT'S CRAZY TALK!

HMM... VERY ODD

FORGET ME A LOT
(Season 1) Mrs. Jack watches as a car that supposedly contains her daughter, Kim, blows up. Her reaction? Dissociative amnesia, naturally.

COUGAR 1, KIM 0
(Season 2) Kim flees from a cougar, only to get caught in an animal trap, only to be rescued by a creepy woodsman in the form of Johnny Drama.

CURTIS LOSES SANITY
(Season 6) Oh, loyal, dependable Curtis, why are you suddenly freaked about working with a terrorist? Now Jack must shoot you in your crazy neck.

EXECUTIVE DISORDER
(Season 6) President Palmer is awakened from his coma with adrenaline to help prevent a war. Because war trumps medically mandated sleepy time.

DEAD *AND* ALIVE?
(Season 7) We *watched* a baddie shove a lethal needle into Tony in season 5. He *died* in Jack's arms. So...was Palmer's doc just waiting off camera?

SUTHERLAND: ALBERT WATSON; 24, SEASONS 5 & 6: KELSEY MCNEAL (3); CHUCK: MICHAEL YARISH

EW EXCLUSIVE!

The New Fall

While *Project Runway* fans will have to wait until Nov. 14 for the return of the high-design, high-drama reality show, Gunn says, "You won't believe they only have a day for this stuff. I would come into the workroom after a couple of

ELISA, 42
Hometown El Paso **Résumé** Avant-garde designer discovered by *Vogue*. **Fashion Must** A great pair of boots **Tim Says!** "Her conflict was, Is this fashion or wearable art? She really wanted to debate that. You'll see it on the runway and in the workroom."

VICTORYA, 34
Hometown Winchester, Va. **Résumé** Spent six years in Europe working as a... journalist. **Fashion Must** Patent-leather ankle boots and colorful tights **Tim Says!** "She's dogged, determined, tenacious." Ahem, would that be code for difficult? "You'll see. You will see."

MARION, 40
Hometown Tyler, Tex. **Résumé** Has his own fashion collection, and a home-decor shop in Dallas. **Fashion Must** Thin stretch suspenders **Tim Says!** "Designers design. If you can design a house, you can design fashion. If you can design a table setting, you can design fashion."

JACK, 38
Hometown Seattle **Résumé** Focus on menswear, with a design stint at Tommy Hilfiger. **Fashion Must** A sugar daddy **Tim Says!** "He's very adept at tailoring, which is certainly needed in womenswear." Bonus: "He's charismatic, funny, and incredibly likable."

KEVIN, 31
Hometown Fairfield, N.J. **Résumé** Learned how to sew from his aunt Ida and worked for cousin Susana Monaco. **Fashion Must** Cool vintage boots **Tim Says!** "He is very serious, sometimes too much so. I feel like delivering that Nina Garcia line, 'Lighten up! It's just fashion!'"

JILLIAN, 26
Hometown Selden, N.Y. **Résumé** Designed for Rugby Ralph Lauren and Searle. **Fashion Must** A sweater-dress with colored tights **Tim Says!** "[Her aesthetic] is girly, flirtatious; not unlike Betsey Johnson and Diane von Furstenberg, she's her own muse."

CHRISTIAN, 21
Hometown Annapolis, Md. **Résumé** Newly minted design-school grad. **Fashion Must** Amazing blazer **Tim Says!** Of this season's youngest, "it's seldom in my years of teaching that I would say this, but Christian is a prodigy. He is a fashion prodigy."

GUNN: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM (PP. 18–19) MITCH HASETH (13)

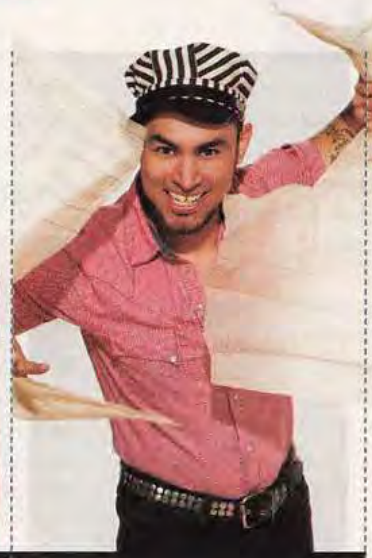
Style Collection

EW has a first look at **SEASON 4'S DESIGNERS**, complete with Gunn-entary. Convinced this is the best round yet, hours and say, 'Where is everyone's set of elves?!'" Say "Guten Tag" to fashion's little helpers. BY MEETA AGRAWAL

SIMONE, 32
Hometown San Francisco **Résumé** Worked under a couturier in Paris. **Fashion Must** Organic wool **Tim Says!** "The real success or failure of the challenge happens [during fabric shopping] at Mood. Simone's textile aptitude is just especially well honed."

RAMI, 31
Hometown Ramallah, Jerusalem **Résumé** Well-known red-carpet-gown designer. **Fashion Must** Hot leather boots **Tim Says!** "His presence is like Cassie on *A Chorus Line*, like 'I can dance circles around these people.' Guess what? The others are really good."

KATHLEEN (A.K.A. SWEET P), 46
Hometown Los Angeles **Résumé** Designs for Harkham, previously for mall chain Bebe. **Fashion Must** A dress **Tim Says!** For the biker (she used to ride with Hell's Belles) and rabid Sonny and Cher fan: "It's always a matter of who she's going to be for this challenge."



RICKY, 35
Hometown Escondido, Calif. **Résumé** Lingerie designer who worked on the sweet-nothing lines of Oscar de la Renta and Vera Wang. **Fashion Must** Gloves **Tim Says!** "Ricky understands construction—lingerie is all about the details, so he has that sensibility."

STEVEN, 30
Hometown Chicago **Résumé** Textile preparator at the Museum of Science and Industry. **Fashion Must** A cardinal red trench **Tim Says!** "He could pierce the tension in the workroom with his levity. Sometimes I'd say, 'Steven, don't you have anything funny to say?'"

KIT, 26
Hometown Los Angeles **Résumé** Stylist with her own edgy line, Kit Pistol. **Fashion Must** Balenciaga fringed scarf **Tim Says!** "She's had a lot of experience with clothes, so she knows what looks good. She's a risk taker, which I applaud, but it also means you're at risk."

CHRIS, 44
Hometown San Francisco **Résumé** Costume designer who's worked with Cirque du Soleil *and* Madonna. **Fashion Must** Bright colors **Tim Says!** "He can infuse clothes with whimsy, some Schiaparelli-like wit. But where's the line between fashion and costume?"

CARMEN, 37
Hometown Charlotte, N.C. **Résumé** Launched Sistahs of Harlem and coauthored *T-Shirt Makeovers*. **Fashion Must** A multipurpose scarf **Tim Says!** Big-personality alert: "Let me put it this way—if everyone were Carmen, I would've run for the hills!"

Monitor

BIRTHS

Actress Salma Hayek, 41, and her fiancé, businessman François-Henri Pinault, 45, welcomed daughter Valentina Paloma on Sept. 21 in Los Angeles.... U.K. singer Charlotte Church, 21, and her boyfriend, rugby player Gavin Henson, 25, greeted daughter Ruby Megan on Sept. 20 in Cardiff, Wales.... *Dancing With the Stars* cohost Samantha Harris, 33, and husband Michael Hess, a financial wholesaler, welcomed daughter Josselyn Sydney on Sept. 23 in Los Angeles.

INJURED

Actor George Clooney, 46, fractured his rib, while his companion, *Fear Factor* winner Sarah Larson, 28, broke her foot during a motorcycle accident Sept. 21 in Weehawken, N.J. The two were riding on Clooney's bike when they collided with a car. No charges have been filed, although the incident remains under investigation by police.

COURTS

24 star Kiefer Sutherland, 40, was arrested on suspicion of DUI after police pulled him over for making an alleged illegal U-turn in Los Angeles on Sept. 25. The actor, who received five years' probation for a 2004 DUI charge, will appear in court on Oct. 16; he could face up to one year in jail if found guilty. A rep for Sutherland could not be reached for comment.... Former news anchor Dan Rather, 75, sued CBS and its former corporate parent, Viacom Inc., for $70 million on Sept. 19 in New York City. Rather's suit claims the network "damaged his reputation" by mishandling the controversy surrounding his September 2004 story that accused President George W. Bush of receiving preferential treatment from the Texas Air National Guard 35 years ago. Documents used in the report were later discredited, which prompted Rather's departure from his CBS job last June. "These complaints are old, and this lawsuit is without merit," said a CBS rep.... On Sept. 21, Britney Spears, 25, was charged with property damage stemming from an Aug. 6 incident in which she allegedly failed to report hitting a parked car with her vehicle in a Los Angeles lot. Spears' arraignment is set for Oct. 10. Reps for the singer did not return calls for comment.... Rapper Snoop Dogg (né Calvin Broadus), 35, was sentenced to 160 hours of community service on Sept. 20 in Santa Ana, Calif., after pleading guilty to possessing a collapsible baton in his carry-on bag at a local airport in September of last year.... *Die Hard* director John McTiernan, 56, was sentenced to four months in prison on Sept. 24 in Los Angeles for lying to the FBI about his association with private eye Anthony Pellicano. (The feds maintain that McTiernan hired Pellicano to wiretap an associate's phone.) The director, who was also ordered to pay a $100,000 fine, must turn himself in to authorities by Jan. 15. McTiernan will appeal the ruling.

DEATHS

Tony-winning actress Alice Ghostley, 81, who played Esmerelda on *Bewitched* and Bernice on *Designing Women*, of colon cancer, Sept. 21, in Los Angeles. —*Adam Markovitz, with additional reporting by Stewart Allen*

LEGACY

MARCEL MARCEAU *1923–2007*

Marceau entertained audiences around the world for over 60 years without ever uttering a word. In addition to his stage work, the iconic French mime, who died at age 84 on Sept. 22 in Paris, appeared in both movies (*Barbarella*) and on television (*The Tonight Show*). He even left his mark in the music world: Marceau's "Walking Against the Wind" sketch is said to have inspired Michael Jackson's famous moonwalk. —*AM*

Hobbit-Nobbing

The Hobbit just might be saved from Mount Doom. On Sept. 18, a judge fined New Line Cinema $125,000 for failing to produce accounting documents in Peter Jackson's suit against the studio. Both parties declined to comment, but insiders say the ruling could encourage New Line to settle the suit, which Jackson filed two years ago over disputed revenue from 2001's *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Since the legal battle has kept the two sides from striking a *Hobbit* deal, a resolution could mean they'll bury the hatchet—and Jackson might be involved in the *Lord of the Rings* prequel after all. Middle-earth fans are already planning a mega-bender at the Shire. —*Missy Schwartz*

Fellowship's Ian Holm

MARCEAU: MICHEL BOUTEFEU/GETTY IMAGES; HAYEK: PHIL MCCARTEN/LANDOV; CLOONEY: FTW/STARFACE/RETNA; SUTHERLAND: SARA DE BOER/RETNA; SPEARS: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM; BROADUS: JORDAN STRAUSS/WIREIMAGE.COM; GHOSTLEY: COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION; *LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RINGS*: PIERRE VINET

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FINISH

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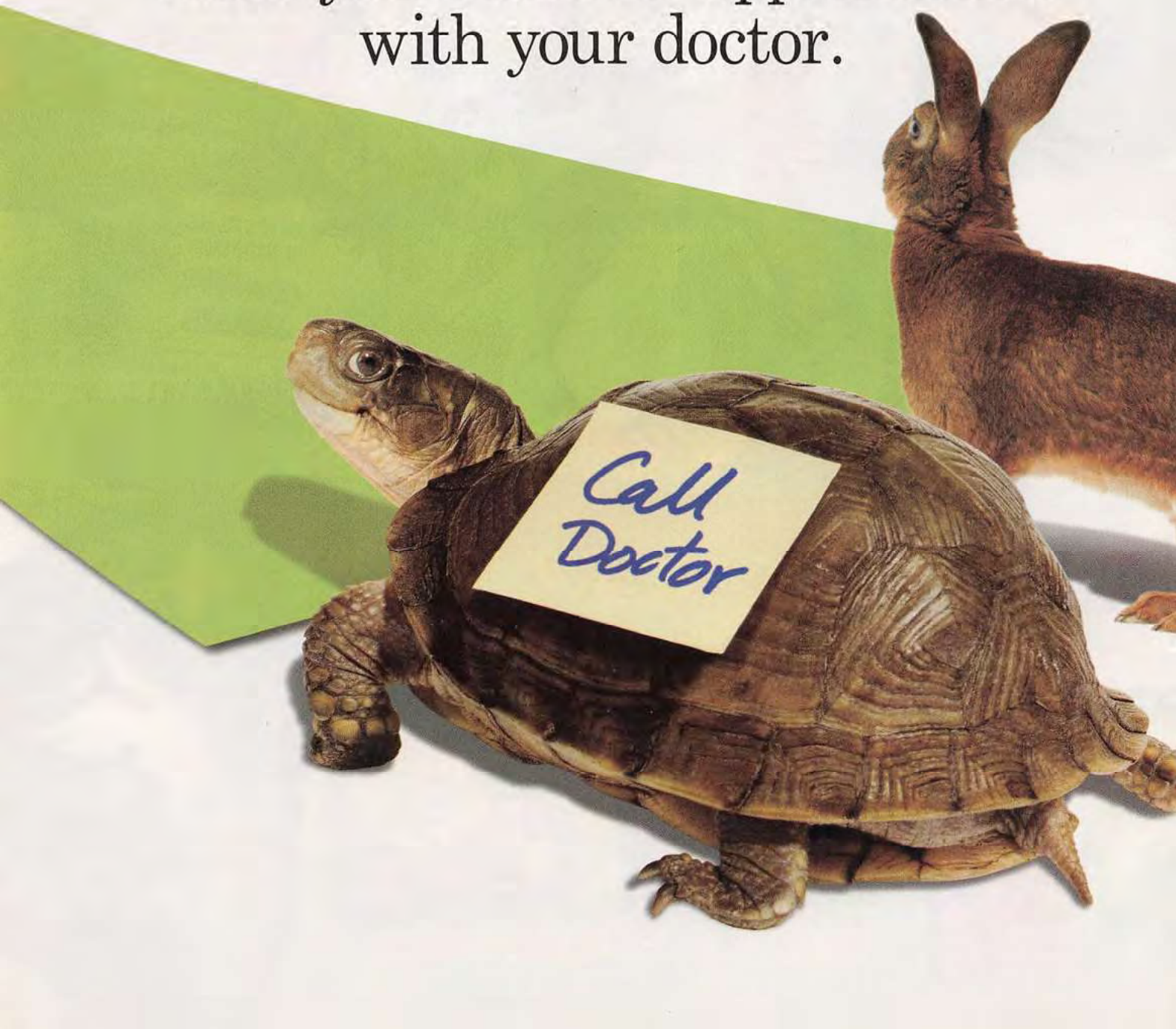

Tell him or her you're determined to quit smoking.

Say you've heard prescription Chantix (varenicline) can help you get on the quitting road. More than likely, your doctor will offer encouragement and answer any questions you may have.

Chantix offers a 2 part approach:

1. The prescription Chantix non-nicotine pill helps keep nicotine from reaching key receptors in the brain.
2. Besides relying on your doctor's help, behavioral support programs are important. Reach out for our 52-week program. It's just a call or click away.

If you're ready to quit, Chantix can help. It can effectively reduce that urge to smoke. Studies show 44% reached their quitting goal at the end of 12 weeks on Chantix (vs. 18% on placebo).

Ask your doctor how Chantix can help get you on the quitting road.

Log onto chantix.com or call 1-888-CHANTIX.

CHANTIX is one treatment option you and your doctor can consider.
The most common side effects include nausea (30%), trouble sleeping, changes in dreaming, constipation, gas and/or vomiting. If you have side effects that bother you or don't go away, tell your doctor.

CHANTIX is for adults and should not be taken with other quit smoking medicines. You may need a lower dose of CHANTIX if you have kidney problems or get dialysis.

Before starting CHANTIX, tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or if you take insulin, asthma medicines or blood thinners. Medicines like these may work differently when you quit smoking.

Please see important patient summary of information on the next page.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

CHANTIX™ (varenicline) TABLETS (Chan-tix)

ABOUT QUITTING SMOKING

Quitting smoking is hard for most people because:

- Nicotine in cigarettes causes physical addiction.
- Some psychological and emotional triggers can make you want to smoke.

Talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit smoking, including counseling and support programs.

ABOUT CHANTIX

- CHANTIX is a prescription medicine that helps adults stop smoking.
- In studies, it reduced the urge to smoke.

BEFORE YOU START USING CHANTIX

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions.
Tell your doctor if you:

- Have kidney problems or get kidney dialysis. You may be prescribed a lower dose of CHANTIX.
- Are pregnant or plan to get pregnant. CHANTIX has not been studied in pregnant women. It is not known if CHANTIX can hurt your unborn baby. It is best to stop smoking before you get pregnant.
- Are breast-feeding. Although not studied, CHANTIX may pass through breast milk. Talk with your doctor about other ways to feed your baby if you take CHANTIX.

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Be sure to tell your doctor if you take:

- insulin
- asthma medicine
- blood thinners

When you stop smoking, your dose of these medicines may need to change.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CHANTIX

The most common side effects of CHANTIX are:

- nausea
- sleep disturbance (trouble sleeping, changes in dreaming)
- constipation
- gas
- vomiting

Tell your doctor if side effects bother you or do not go away. There are other side effects of CHANTIX. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.

Use caution driving or operating machinery until you know how quitting smoking and/or CHANTIX may affect you.

WHO IS CHANTIX FOR?

Who should use CHANTIX:

- Adults who want to stop smoking

Who should NOT use CHANTIX:

- Anyone who is allergic to varenicline tartrate (the active ingredient in CHANTIX) or anything else in CHANTIX
- CHANTIX has not been studied in patients under 18 years.

HOW TO USE CHANTIX

1. Choose a **quit date** to stop smoking.
2. Start CHANTIX 1 week (7 days) before your **quit date**.
   - You can smoke until your **quit date**.
   - Stop smoking *on or before* your **quit date**.
3. Take CHANTIX after eating. Take CHANTIX with a full glass (8 ounces) of water.
4. Take CHANTIX for up to 12 weeks.
5. If you have completely quit smoking by 12 weeks, ask your doctor if another 12 weeks of CHANTIX will help you stay quit.
6. Do not stop taking CHANTIX. Even if you slipped up and smoked, you can keep taking CHANTIX. Some people need a few weeks for CHANTIX to work best.

HOW TO TAKE CHANTIX

CHANTIX comes as a white tablet (0.5 mg) and a blue tablet (1 mg).

- Take the white tablet the first 7 days (first week).
- Take the blue tablet for the rest of the treatment.

Day 1 to Day 3	***white*** tablet: 1 tablet each day
Day 4 to Day 7	***white*** tablet: 1 in the morning AND 1 in the evening
Day 8 to end of treatment	***blue*** tablet: 1 in the morning AND 1 in the evening

- This dosing schedule may not be right for everyone. Talk to your doctor if you are having side effects such as nausea or sleep problems. Your doctor may want to reduce your dose.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

This is only a summary of important information. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for complete product information, *or*

- Go to **www.CHANTIX.com**, *or*
- Call **1-877-CHANTIX (877-242-6849)**.

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SPOTLIGHT

MELISSA ETHERIDGE'S NEW 'AWAKENING' + MATT DAMON'S ROLE CALL + THE MOST EXCELLENT ADVENTURE BEHIND 'DARJEELING'

STYLING: JULIE ALDERFER. HAIR: SHARMYNE JENKINS; MAKEUP: KAREN DUPICHE; PROP STYLING: KEIA BOUNDS; SHIRT: LANE BRYANT

SHERRI SHEPHERD

The newly crowned talk-show host shares her world 'View.' BY JENNIFER ARMSTRONG

Sherri Shepherd struts onto the stage at *The View*, a bundle of happy fun energy, with glowy brown skin and a shimmery silver top. Her infectious giant grin only fades when the subject of teaching junior-high kids about condoms sends her into a brow-furrowing, hand-flailing rant about "our girls" and "self-worth"

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN PATRICE O'BRIEN

Shepherd cozies up to Goldberg and Joy Behar on *The View*

and what "you don't go and give men." The cameras break for commercial, but she keeps grumbling under her breath through makeup touch-ups, until, finally, she stops and faces the studio audience. "Yes," she says with a laugh, "I'm still going at it!"

Actually, she's only just getting started. After 17 hard years of working the stand-up circuit, the 40-year-old is finally poised for her star-making turn as a funny secretary-turned-actress who quotes Bible verse but can tell a filthy joke. That is, playing nothing but her complicated Everywoman self, now that she's officially filling the fifth chair on ABC's daily chatfest.

"I was very scared coming here, because this wasn't hiding behind lines," Shepherd admits after finishing up her first official week on the job. "I wasn't used to the level of criticism you get. People have I-will-jump-off-a-building-if-Sherri-joins-*The View* blogs." Apparently, she hasn't yet heard there's no surer sign that you've made it.

Growing up in Chicago—and later, as a teenager, in the middle-class suburb of Hoffman Estates—Shepherd never saw a showbiz career as a real possibility. But that changed when she moved to L.A. and, while working as a legal secretary, went to a comedy show featuring Andrew Dice Clay and Eddie Griffin. "Before it started, I don't know what I was saying, but everyone was laughing," she remembers. "The people around me were like, 'You could do this.'"

Inspired, she took a six-week comedy class, then clawed her way up through the L.A. club circuit. But when her mother died from diabetes complications, Shepherd found God—something she had to reconcile with her chosen profession. "I have these good jokes," she says, "where sometimes I go, 'Lord, can't I just use it?' But the Lord—he sounds like Barry White when I talk to him—he'll be like, 'You've got to stop saying that.'"

With her cleaned-up act, Shepherd did eventually get signed by an agent and found modest Hollywood success with bit parts on the likes of *Friends*, and finally as a regular on *Less Than Perfect*. Unfortunately, her personal life more than lived up to her sitcom's name: She married fellow comic Jeff Tarpley in 2001, and four years later, their son, Jeffrey, was born—nearly three months premature. In the next year Tarpley also fathered a child, Jalen, now 1, with another woman. "I have to admit I was not happy about the baby," says Shepherd. The couple reunited, however, and Shepherd insisted the boys be raised as stepbrothers: "I felt it was important for him and my son to have a relationship," she says, "and that would only happen if I had some sense."

Recently separated from Tarpley once again, Shepherd's ready to concentrate on making her lasting mark at *The View*. The show's producers had been courting her for months—she made a whopping 23 appearances as guest cohost—but say she nailed the job when she did a turn during Rosie O'Donnell's fateful dustup with conservative cohost Elisabeth Hasselbeck last May. "Sherri got laughs in the middle of the world's most uncomfortable conversation," exec producer Bill Geddie says. "She makes any segment better."

So far the ratings bear that out, with her first day garnering 3.9 million viewers, up 52 percent over the same day last year. In large part, Barbara Walters credits Shepherd's down-to-earth quality. "She is a mother, she's had a difficult [separation], she's very much a Christian, all of which she talks about," Walters says. "She talks all the time about how big her bosom is, and I think people can relate." Sometimes all that talking can get her in trouble, as during a debate over her antievolution stance when she mystified viewers by saying she didn't know whether the world was flat or round. (Which she later retracted.) "We always wanted this to be a good-natured show where we could take serious topics and discuss them with good humor, and she reflects that," Walters says. "She has theories that are very different from ours and is not afraid to express them."

> **"She has theories that are different from ours and is not afraid to express them."**
> *—Barbara Walters*

And Shepherd is the first to admit she's neither scholar nor trained pundit—she's just a mom who doesn't even know which political party she favors. "I've been doing so much hustling and surviving and taking care of my family, and I feel like I can finally sit up and breathe and learn something," she says. "I think I represent a body of women who don't know a lot. I'm the one who can sit up there and say, 'Who is General Petraeus?' I'm not pretending nothing." ■

SMACKS OF SHERRI

Yep, she has something to say about everyone.

On her plans to marry Michael Jackson at 17

"It was just after *Thriller* came out. I would take the bus out to his compound every day. I would write his mother letters. I never pictured us having sex; I just thought we'd wear matching jumpsuits."

On former *Less Than Perfect* costar and current friend Andy Dick

"I think if I didn't have God, I would be like Andy Dick. I would be pretty lost." [Dick declined to comment.]

On Rosie O'Donnell

"She can't deny a brawl, but she's able to handle it. I ain't gonna be trying to fight you. I'm the person you come to when you want prayer."

THE VIEW: STEVE FENN; JACKSON: FRANK EDWARDS/FOTOS INTERNATIONAL/GETTY IMAGES; DICK: JEAN BAPTISTE LACROIX/WIREIMAGE.COM; O'DONNELL: JACKSON LEE/ADMEDIA/SIPA PRESS

Q&A

MELISSA ETHERIDGE

How the soulful artist drew inspiration from the Boss *and* the bedroom for her new album. BY SHIRLEY HALPERIN

With her unapologetic political views, straight-up take on sexuality, and that instantly recognizable rasp, Melissa Etheridge defines vocal. Save for contributing the Oscar-winning theme to *An Inconvenient Truth*, she's been relatively quiet on the music front the last three years, focusing on her health after battling breast cancer. A reawakened Etheridge now looks back on her life—the good, the bad, the dirty—with a concept album, *The Awakening*.

The songs span your start in the bar scene ("California") to the future ("What Happens Tomorrow"). When was "Threesome" inspired? Oh, from about the mid-'80s to the late '90s. [*Laughs*] I was unhappy for quite a while. I was searching and thinking the answer was in the bedroom. But I found it in myself.

Okay, here's another three-way for ya: Led Zeppelin, Van Halen, or Genesis—which reunion are you most excited about? If it's Genesis without Peter Gabriel, then I don't want 'em. And a Bonham-less Zeppelin? Oh, Lord. Do I have to see any of them?

What's romance music for you and your wife, Tammy? She loves her classic folk rock. She's a huge John Denver fan, so "Annie's Song" will just melt her. Me, give me some Peter Gabriel. "In Your Eyes," that's the sweetest song.

Which other female singers are you liking these days? Amy Winehouse....lesbians [gravitate toward] strong women, or women who are trying to be, even though they're tortured, like Kelly Clarkson. In country music, there are certain female artists, like Gretchen Wilson, where you're going to find lesbians because they're responding to that more aggressive side.

The album's title...any connection to your friend Bruce Springsteen's *The Rising*? Mama does love her Bruce. It's there. When he goes, "Come on up for the rising," I'm answering that because I believe we should all rise up!

Character Study

Matt Damon

Putting Jason Bourne aside (not that we recommend you try that at home), which roles have been the Oscar winner's favorites?

"Will Hunting is so close to my heart because my best friend [Ben Affleck] and I invented him, he's from Boston, and it was what we knew. The stakes were pretty high with *Good Will Hunting* and it worked out as best as it can in this business—people saw the movie, it got good reviews, I was happy with the finished product, and they gave us an Oscar. I am also pretty fond of Tom Ripley—playing smart and sinister is just so much fun. I wasn't that fond of his choice of swim trunks, though, so a few points away for that. And John Grady Cole in *All the Pretty Horses* was good too. The integrity of that character is admirable. Unfortunately, I am the only one who saw that movie, so no one will get that reference."

ETHERIDGE: DANNY CLINCH; GOOD WILL HUNTING, ALL THE PRETTY HORSES, THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY: EVERETT COLLECTION

The Darjeeling Limited's Schwartzman, Wilson, and Adrien Brody

Coppola, Schwartzman, Anderson, Brody, and Wilson

JOURNEY TO 'DARJEELING'

Director Wes Anderson recruited friends Jason Schwartzman (*Rushmore*) and filmmaker Roman Coppola (*CQ*) to help write his three-brothers-on-a-train-in-India dramedy, *The Darjeeling Limited*. They learned a few lessons along the way. BY ADAM B. VARY

Schwartzman's back on board, this time with Waris Ahluwalia, Wilson, and Brody

1. You never know when you may be writing a movie.

In 2005, the press tour for Anderson's 'The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou' ended in France, where, coincidentally, Schwartzman was acting in and Coppola working on sister Sofia's 'Marie Antoinette.' Anderson moved in with Schwartzman.

WES ANDERSON My first idea for the story was really to have Jason Schwartzman, Roman Coppola, and I write together, daydreaming together.

JASON SCHWARTZMAN After work, Wes would bounce ideas off me for a movie about three brothers on a train in India. That would lead to personal stories, and then we would laugh. After about three weeks of that, he said, "Why don't we bring Roman in on this?" And I said, "In on what?" And he said, "This movie we're writing." And that's when I realized we were writing a movie.

ROMAN COPPOLA Wes read us a sketch of the opening sequence: "Okay, there's a guy running, trying to get the train. He doesn't make it. Another guy, one of the brothers, runs past him, gets on the train." Actually, very much the way it appears in the movie.

2. Stay in constant contact.

After 'Antoinette' wrapped, Anderson remained in Paris, while the other two flew back to Los Angeles.

JS We would do these five-hour conference calls. I had to get a new long-distance plan, but it was great. I looked forward to them every day. We would always give each other little homework assignments, like "Tonight, Roman and Wes will watch this movie and I'll watch this movie."

3. Live your movie—but pack light.

Seven months into writing, the trio decided to travel to India and take a train journey through the country to fully experience their characters' lives.

JS I think the line was "Let's go to India and not come back until we have a draft finished," which is exciting and scary if you have a nonrefundable plane ticket. Most of the places we went ended up in the movie. We would act out scenes in real time in the real places. We must have seemed kooky.

RC India is such a colorful, staggering, beautiful, unusual place. We would all squeeze into the dining booths and observe all the other passengers.

JS Wes brought this printer because he wanted to print out each draft so we could walk around with it—kind of like Owen [Wilson]'s character in the movie having his assistant bring his printer.

WA We had gone to great lengths to get the right power adapter for the printer. Roman had it set up to work, but it had to go into the power for the electric razors. I didn't realize that. I plugged it into the normal power supply on the train. I fried it.

JS I came out of the bathroom and they were laughing. They thought it was funny that it seemed like it could be part of the movie.

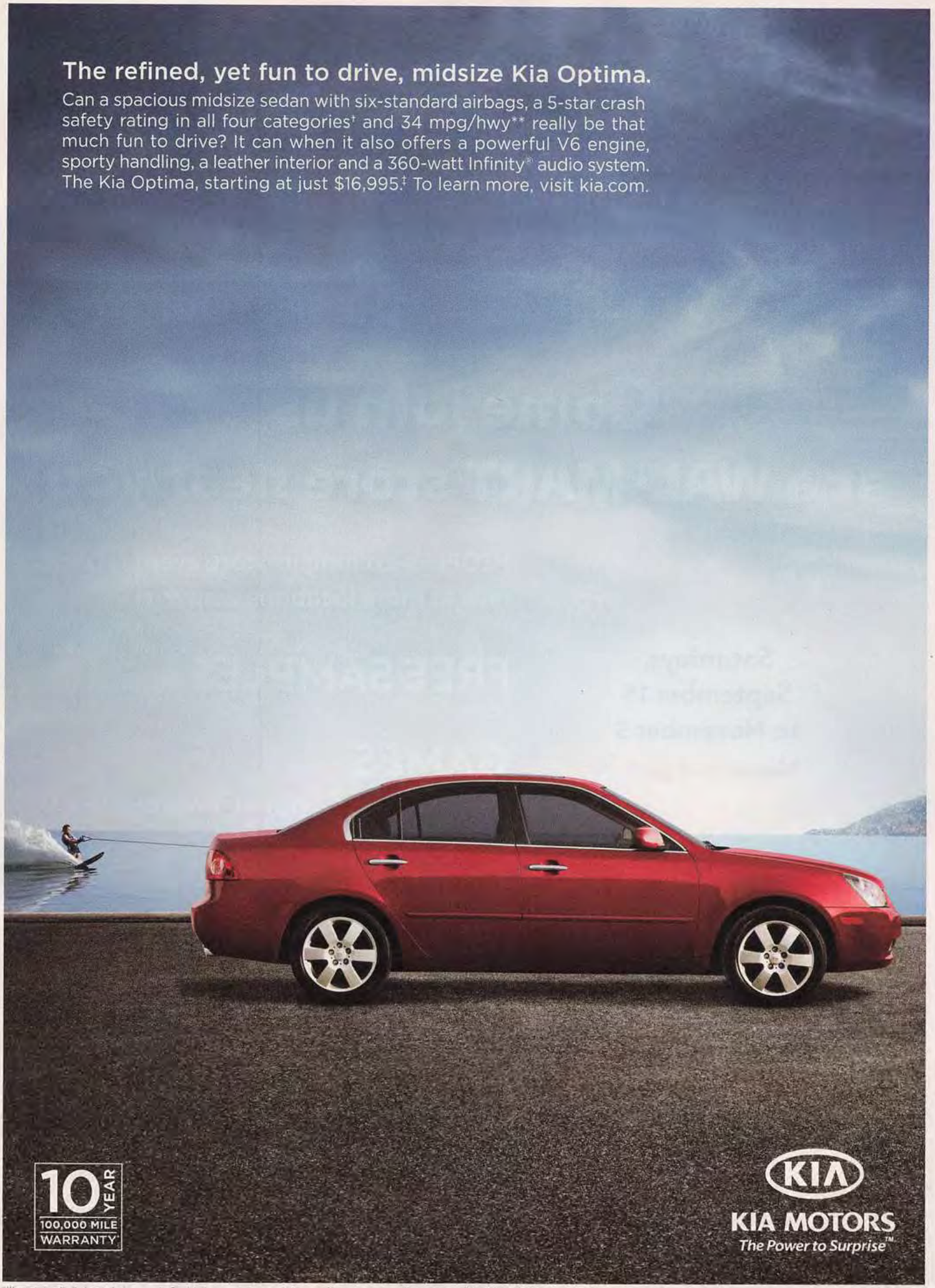
4. Blur the lines between what's real and what's fiction as much as possible.

WA There's a lot of just sitting there racking your brain, learning all about these characters.

RC We never spent much time talking about the story. It was more about what's happening to these guys now.

JS It was like an archaeological dig, I suppose. It seemed like we weren't creating anything; we were just documenting it.

JAMES HAMILTON (4)



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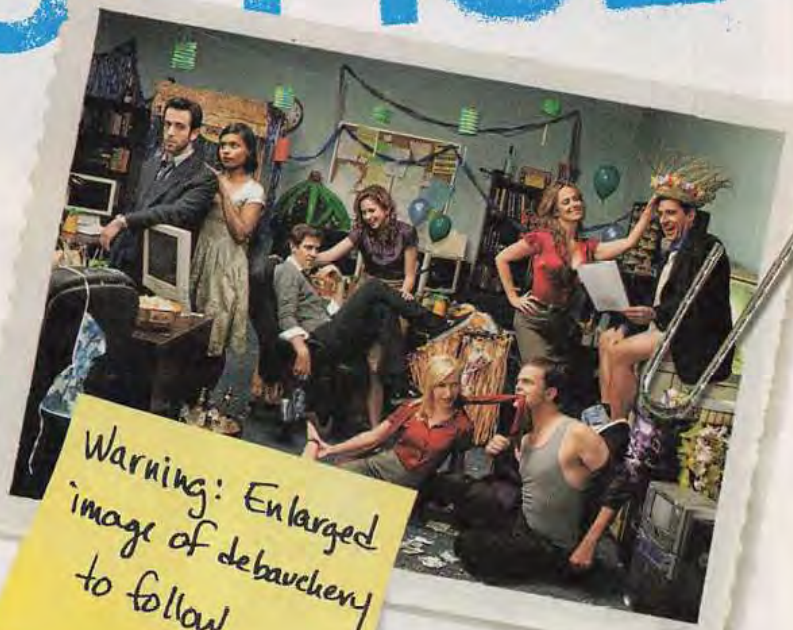


Warning: Enlarged image of debauchery to follow →

SUBJECT:

Working Overtime

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
We've crashed 'The Office' party just in time. As the new season begins, the hit show is exploring awkward courtships, clandestine relationships, and a love like no other... Trust us.

STORY BY: Whitney Pastorek

PHOTOGRAPH BY: Art Streiber

There is no way you will find *The Office*'s set unless someone tells you where to look, and even then, it ain't easy. Buried deep in a swath of Van Nuys warehouses, the soundstage sits at the rear of a dead-end street where 18-wheelers turn around and the hot sun bakes the concrete blister gray. The first thing that catches your eye is a sign for Vance Refrigeration, and then another for a paper company by the name of Dunder Mifflin. Soon you're idling past that familiar parking lot, the very spot that's been home to both a tear-jerking confession of unrequited love and a ridiculous bouncy castle intended to catch the faux-suicide attempt of an unhinged boss desperate to prove a point.

On this mid-September day, though, the anonymous lot, clogged with trailers and craft services, is almost unrecognizable. Inside, you're ushered into a small room just off the stage, and things become more familiar. Two monitors transmit shaky, nausea-inducing images from the mockumentary cameras: boxes of paper, drab carpeting, venetian blinds, a poster of some very scary babies. You watch an ordinary day in the life of *The Office* unspool as cast members wander in one by one to talk about how blessed they feel to be a part of this show. But that's where the conversation starts and ends: They're reluctant to spill any details

(continued on page 34)

LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED!

From left:

B.J. Novak, Mindy Kaling, John Krasinski, Jenna Fischer, Angela Kinsey, Rainn Wilson, Melora Hardin, Steve Carell

The Office: Working overtime

(From top) *The Office*-mates; basket cases Carell and Wilson; Phyllis Smith is seeing red; ice queen Kinsey and Helms; Krasinski shows off his famous eyebrow arch

about the series' fourth season, which started Sept. 27. If they do, it seems, executive producer Greg Daniels—described by one actor as "the most quiet badass you'll ever know"—will kill them. So here we are in a tiny room on a dead-end street in an industrial section of Van Nuys not being told anything. In a way, it's appropriate: a very awkward story on the awkward genius that is *The Office*.

BEAR IN MIND, there was a time when this show couldn't give it away, and we're not talking about secrets. The first season, in 2005, averaged but 5.4 million viewers for NBC, thanks to apathy fueled by the critical suspicion that only lunatics would attempt to adapt a beloved British series for American television. (The disaster known as *Coupling* had just come and gone two years earlier.) Yet there were flashes of unique hilarity (see No. 5 on our Awkward TV list), which led to a charitable second-season pickup—and that's when, like employees on soft pretzel day, the fates began to align. In the summer of '05, star Steve Carell wowed crowds with *The 40 Year-Old Virgin*; season 2 won the Emmy for best comedy; millions of new viewers discovered the show via the magic of iPods (makes a great Secret Santa gift, by the way); and little by little, the emotionally stunted, frequently spastic, and cringe-worthy antics of Michael Scott (Carell) and the Dunder Mifflin crew scrambled from the ratings basement toward something approaching cult success. Last year, in season 3, the show became a demographic power player—ranking 13th for all programs that were watched live or within seven days of broadcast by those ridiculously important 18- to 34-year-olds. Plus, cast members besides Carell started showing up in movies—a *Blades of Glory* here, a *License to Wed* there. Two weeks ago, Daniels won another Emmy, this time for writing. And now it appears that *The Office*, no longer feeling the ax over its head, is in a position to tell a national magazine with a not-inconsiderable circulation that they won't be disclosing all that much information about season 4, and they hope we understand.

We don't, of course. So we push harder until they finally begin to crack. "We're going to have stories of disease, misery, jealousy, lawsuits, car wrecks, homelessness, betrayal, financial ruin, broken hearts, and kidnapping, but funny," relents Daniels at last. "Oh, and a pencil sharpener goes missing." See, that wasn't so hard, was it? But wait, there's more! Jan (Melora Hardin) takes her cohabitual relationship with Michael to the next level by trying to redecorate his condo; one story line in the first few episodes involves Angela's (Angela Kinsey) sick cat, Dwight's (Rainn Wilson) irritation, and the phrase "claw marks in the frozen peas." A large part of this season's focus will be on Ryan (B.J. Novak), the former temp–turned–corporate suit who is now basically evil. His attempts to force the company into the digital age will mirror a real NBC social-networking website brewing at dundermifflininfinity.com, while his attempts to distance himself from spurned ex-girlfriend Kelly (Mindy Kaling) will prove less than successful. On the day we visited the set, Michael was holding a pizza delivery boy hostage over an unhonored coupon. And in staffing news, kooky crank Creed (Creed Bratton) and Darryl from the warehouse (Craig Robinson) have been upgraded to series regulars.

(PP. 32–33) STYLING: LAWREN SAMPLE/MARGARETMALDONADO.COM. SET DESIGN: NICK TORTORICI. PRODUCTION PRODUCT.COM (FOR CLOTHING, HAIR, AND MAKEUP CREDITS, GO TO P. 7). (THIS PAGE) *THE OFFICE* CAST: PHYLLIS SMITH, KINSEY AND HELMS; JUSTIN LUBIN; CARELL AND WILSON; KRASINSKI: RON TOM.

"It's a group of driven artists," says Hardin of the cast. "They're not just taking the paycheck and blowing it on cocaine."

What about Jim (John Krasinski) and Pam (Jenna Fischer)? Fischer uses the word "courtship" in reference to the next phase of their relationship—"There's something about Jim and Pam that is true love personified in a TV show," she says sweetly—while bemoaning how painful it is to stare up at the much taller Krasinski after breaking bones in her back in a fall during the off-season. Daniels, of course, is vague, making reference only to "a soap opera-y thing that I'm gonna let be a surprise." We nod, smile, and think to ourselves: What is this, *Lost*?

Outside of plot specifics, though, the employees of *The Office* are more than happy to talk about whatever you want. They'll tell you who's loud in his trailer (Krasinski, who claims it's everyone else who's coming over and making noise) and who's the most likely to lose it in a scene (Kinsey, but she's getting better). They crack on each other, jump on each other, and slow dance with each other between takes. They even haze reporters: Ask Carell or Daniels to define awkwardness, and they'll just sit there and stare at you, as the tape recorder quietly creaks. After an agonizing stretch of silence, you realize, *Oh, right*. Then they'll smile, and you will, too, because you fell for it. Twice.

"I think what surprised me most was the familial vibe of the cast when the cameras *aren't* rolling," says Ed Helms, whose rageaholic preppie Andy is the sole survivor of season 3's Stamford branch merge. (Rashida Jones is slated to return for two episodes to tie up her story line as Jim's awesome but not-true love Karen, before she disappears into her new Fox midseason comedy, *Unhitched*.) Helms' sentiment is often expressed in the entertainment business, but something about this warehouse makes you believe. In person, the *Office* office is exactly how you've imagined it, right down to the slightly stale papery smell. Watching the cast lounge at their desks, you realize this is less of a sitcom and more of a social experiment: Stick 15 funny people in a box, and see what happens.

"We are with each other *all day*," says Kinsey. "Any episode you see where we're in the conference room? We are in one *tiiiiny* little room together. For 12 hours. We know *everything*." That constant togetherness makes the onscreen relationships more believable—and means the minor players are never far from the action. "Greg started on *Saturday Night Live*, and part of his philosophy has been interactive," says Brian Baumgartner, who plays the oafish Kevin. "It has truly become an ensemble."

Baumgartner and the show's director of photography are now co-writing a feature. In fact, virtually every cast member is creatively involved in something beyond their roles on screen. Novak, Kaling, and Paul Lieberstein (sad-sack Toby) are on the *Office* writing/producing staff; Carell will write and direct episodes this season. Krasinski and Hardin both recently directed movies, and a bunch of folks still perform stand-up or improv on a regular basis. "It is really a group of driven, creative, and thoughtful artists," says Hardin of her cast mates. "They're not just taking the paycheck and blowing it on cocaine." As Novak puts it, somewhat more delicately, "It is a perfect creative environment." And a comfortable one: Ask Krasinski—who appears alongside no less than George Clooney in this fall's *Leatherheads*—if his burgeoning movie career is going to lead him to pull a Caruso. "You mean like leave this show?" he asks, familiarly wide-eyed. "There is not even an inkling. It's given me everything. The fact that I could go do a movie and then 'come home' to this? That's the best of both worlds." Carell agrees. "I'm not taking any of it for granted," he says, for clearly the umpteenth time. "I never want to assume that anything will continue. That way, it's a constant surprise when it does."

OF COURSE, it helps to have the head of the network in your corner: Ben Silverman, the man who brought *The Office* Stateside via his production company, Reveille, was named co-chairman of NBC Entertainment this spring. From his perspective, the comedy is no longer struggling to find an audience, but defining what viewers want to watch. "You look at the motion pictures this summer, and you see things like *Superbad* and *Knocked Up* deliver huge box office," he notes. "The audience is growing up now, and alternative styles are becoming mainstream." The question is, How much farther into the mainstream can *The Office* climb, given that the series has to face off against *Grey's Anatomy* and *CSI* in its new Thursdays at 9 time slot (which Daniels calls "the worst around")?

The cast seems none too concerned about sexy docs or forensic geeks. "We just need to do what we do well, and do it weller-er," says Wilson. "The great thing about Greg Daniels is he's always interested in subverting the humor. Twisting it, and going into darker, weirder, more off-kilter places." Ten minutes later, the actor is out on the set, sniffing the hand of the guy who wields the slate, and giggling maniacally right up until that slate comes down, the director says, "Action," and—well, something happens. We'd tell you, but they'd kill us. Awkwardly, no doubt.

>EW.COM To see exclusive video interviews with *The Office* cast, go to ew.com/office

PHYLLIS AND BOB: PAUL DRINKWATER

'Office' Romance

The four main couples may be on our covers, but the love runs deep at Dunder Mifflin. Here's an update on the relationships of the other cubicle dwellers. —*WP*

PHYLLIS LAPIN AND BOB VANCE Despite the Michael-induced train wreck of their wedding, these two remain happily married. For the record, though, Phyllis still thinks Jim is hot.

OSCAR MARTINEZ AND HIS PARTNER, GIL Gay? Sure. But according to Oscar Nuñez, his character "might be conservative. He might vote Republican." *Definitely* awkward.

TOBY FLENDERSON AND HIS UNREQUITED CRUSH ON PAM Ongoing. "We're going to explore that a little bit more," promises Daniels.

For the 17 Most Awkward Comedy Moments in TV History →

EW Cringe-A-Thon

Awkward TV Nation

It entertains. It captivates. It may even provoke hysterical laughter. But it also kinda makes you want to gouge out your eyes with a carving fork so you don't have to watch another second of it. This (mostly new) phenomenon is called Awkward TV, and we're here to celebrate outstanding achievement in the genre. You'll find no accidental train wrecks here (e.g., no appearing on a talk show plastered or any reality shows, period), just premeditated squirm *intended* to make you feel uncomfortable. Here are the 17 Most Awkward Comedy Moments in TV History. (Why 17? Because it's awkward!)

Da Ali G Show

The Office (U.K.)

1. The Office (U.K.)

Season 2, Episode 4 (2002)

The Moment On his first (and only) paid motivational speaking gig, a cocky David Brent (Ricky Gervais) proffers a twisted philosophical metaphor about how he'd rather be dead than have no arms and no legs, and concludes with an unsuccessful attempt to win over the bewildered crowd with an unending one-man clap line to Tina Turner's "Simply the Best."

Why It's Awkward Gervais' *Office* is the progenitor of the Modern Awkward Movement, the cringefest to which all cringefests are compared. And though Brent's clueless humiliations may be many, the fact that this one happens among strangers, not co-workers, elevates the pain level to Hall of Fame status.

2. Seinfeld

Episode: "The Pick" (1992)

The Moment Jerry gets caught picking at his nose. 'Nuff said.

Why It's Awkward Truth is, *Seinfeld*—co-created by Awkward Auteur Larry David—is all about lives lived uncomfortably. The choicest nuggets are so iconic, no description is necessary. The Funny Dance. The Eclair. Puffy Shirt. And the painful genius of *Seinfeld*'s awkwardness isn't just the sometimes familiar, sometimes absurd scenarios—it's watching Jerry and his nonreflective, socially inept pals try (vainly) to dodge the inevitable ramifications. This classic *busted!* moment—complete with Jerry's memorably lame protest ("It was a scratch!")—is our pick-of-the-litter choice.

3. Da Ali G Show

Episode: "Peace" (2004)

The Moment As alter ego Borat—that cluelessly offensive TV journalist from Kazakhstan—Sacha Baron Cohen entertains the patrons of a Tucson, Ariz., country & western bar by performing a catchy little ditty with such lyrics as "Throw the Jew down the well/So my country can be free/You must grab him by his horns/Then we have a big party." Apparently not in on the joke (Borat is fake; Baron Cohen is Jewish), the crowd starts cheerfully clapping to the beat and singing along.

Why It's Awkward You'd expect Borat to be met with stunned silence or, more appropriately, boos. Nope. The audience delights in accompanying him on one of the most offensive songs ever written.

4. Fridays

Episode: Feb. 20, 1981

The Moment Midway through a pot-smoking sketch on ABC's *Saturday Night Live* knockoff, guest host Andy Kaufman bails out, saying, "I feel stupid," and then sits in jittery silence. Trapped, his three stranded acting partners (including Michael Richards) veer from confusion to anger, until Kaufman pours a glass of water on Richards, producer Jack Burns throws punches, and the show abruptly cuts to commercial.

Why It's Awkward The other actors and Burns were in on the joke, but viewers never knew the whole thing was a gag: All they saw was Kaufman (an awkward-comedy pioneer) earning the palpable hatred of his costars. Ha?

5. The Office

Episode: "Diversity Day" (2005)

The Moment When Kevin's (Brian Baumgartner) monotone reenactment of Chris Rock's "N---as vs. Black People" riff at a Dunder Mifflin sensitivity training seminar makes Michael (Steve Carell) twitchy—*he's ruining the bit!*—the wannabe funnyman finally interrupts and unleashes his Rock homage, a screechy, jerky, minstrel-show-worthy performance. "Whatchoowant, a cookie?" Crickets.

Why It's Awkward Rule No. 1 in the Handbook for the Reconstructed White American: Never mimic anyone who isn't white. But the awkwardness is

The Office

SEINFELD: NBCU PHOTO BANK; KAUFMAN: EVERETT COLLECTION

Curb Your Enthusiasm

Arrested Development

also painfully universal—it's the well-meaning joke that goes egregiously awry. Good intentions plus crappy execution—a formula *The Office* works so ingeniously—is the mathematical framework of almost all awkward comedy.

6. Curb Your Enthusiasm

Episode: "The Survivor" (2004)

The Moment At an anniversary dinner for Larry (Larry David) and Cheryl (Cheryl Hines), *Survivor*'s Colby Donaldson is dragged into a game of who-had-it-tougher with a different kind of survivor—a Holocaust one. (Colby: "We had very little rations. No snacks!") The absurd one-upmanship culminates with the two men violently shouting "*I'm* a survivor!" at each other—and gravy flying into Larry's face.

Why It's Awkward *Curb* isn't afraid to mine humor from the taboo, and if a reality-show contestant comparing his struggles to the pain of someone nearly killed in a horrific genocide doesn't make you wince, you're a bad person.

7. Freaks and Geeks

Episode: "Girlfriends and Boyfriends" (2000)

The Moment Dim-witted high schooler Nick (Jason Segel) lures girlfriend Lindsay (Linda Cardellini) into his basement lair, pops in an eight-track, and begins serenading her with Styx's "Lady." Lindsay's reaction quickly turns from delighted to disturbed as Nick gets increasingly—and embarrassingly—animated. "You wanna make out or something?" she finally asks in an attempt to break the tension. "No," he replies. "All guys wanna make out. But I just want to hold you."

Why It's Awkward Because it represents teenagedom at it's most uncomfortable and relatable: that moment when you try to be all smooth but don't really know how and come off creepy instead.

Freaks and Geeks

8. The Larry Sanders Show

Episode: "Hank's Contract" (1992)

The Moment As the pompous-doofus sidekick to HBO's great fictional talk-show host, Sanders (Garry Shandling), Jeffrey Tambor's Hank Kingsley wants a raise. Hank doesn't help his case by reminding Larry about the time he "chipped a tooth on the bathroom urinal" and asking why Larry found that funny.

"It was a back tooth," murmurs Larry.

Why It's Awkward Shandling's confrontation-phobic Larry is squirmily uncomfortable discussing money, preferring to leave that to his producer Artie (Rip Torn), whom he puts on speakerphone without Hank's knowledge. But Artie coughs, revealing that he's eavesdropping, leaving all three unnerved.

9. Arrested Development

Episode: "The Righteous Brothers" (2005)

The Moment After two years of foreplay, teenagers George Michael (Michael Cera) and Maeby (Alia Shawkat) kiss. The scene would be tender and adorable *if they weren't first cousins*.

Why It's Awkward If we have to spell it out for you, remove your brother's lips from your neck and reread the previous sentence. Incest spawned some of the show's strongest episodes, including "Motherboy XXX," an Oedipal gala for mothers and sons, and "Afternoon Delight," which summons the kind of discomfort that can only be felt by watching an uncle and a niece perform the Starland Vocal Band song. ("Thinkin' of you's workin' up my appetite/Looking forward to a little afternoon delight.") Hee hee hee... Sorry—we mean *ewwww*.

10. Late Night With David Letterman

Episode: Nov. 16, 1983

The Moment Larry "Bud" Melman (the late Calvert DeForest) is dispatched by Dave to conduct interviews and offer hot towels to tourists at the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Why It's Awkward For one thing, he's impossible to hear, because amateur Melman keeps pointing his handheld microphone at the bus passengers while he's talking. ("It's like a ventriloquist-in-training," remarks Letterman to the howling studio audience.) And visitors from Virginia and Maryland are politely puzzled and have no clue how to response to Melman's oddball generosity.

CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM: RON BATZDORFF; TAMBOR, DEFOREST: EVERETT COLLECTION

EW Cringe-A-Thon

The Comeback

11. The Comeback

Episode: "Valerie Triumphs at the Upfronts" (2005)

The Moment Valerie Cherish (Lisa Kudrow) hits a big presentation to advertisers in NYC to promote her new show, *Room & Bored*, and is subjected to multiple indignities. First the washed-up sitcom star is accidentally left behind on the way out to a cast dinner. Then she breaks into tears and uncharacteristic swearing off stage when the network fails to introduce her with the rest of the cast.

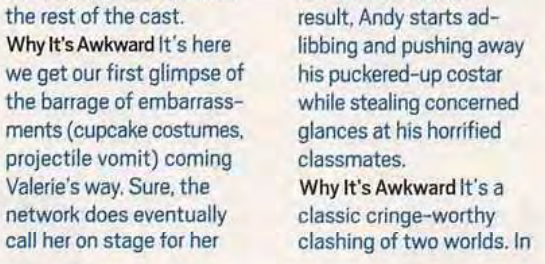
Why It's Awkward It's here we get our first glimpse of the barrage of embarrassments (cupcake costumes, projectile vomit) coming Valerie's way. Sure, the network does eventually call her on stage for her reality show, but that's just the kind of cruel give-and-take that kept Valerie—and us—going for the whole season.

12. Extras

Season 2, Episode 5 (2007)

The Moment To boost his cred with critics, Andy (Ricky Gervais) takes a gay character role in an Ian McKellen play but gets cold feet when a bunch of homophobic school chums come to opening night and he has to plant one on a fellow. As a result, Andy starts ad-libbing and pushing away his puckered-up costar while stealing concerned glances at his horrified classmates.

Why It's Awkward It's a classic cringe-worthy clashing of two worlds. In trying to please both camps, Andy ends up alienating everyone. We see it happening and yet are powerless to stop it.


Extras

13. Sex and the City

Episode: "Running With Scissors" (2000)

The Moment After skulking around for weeks with married ex Big (Chris Noth), and with secret rendezvous spots growing seedier, Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker) wants to end the affair. But just one more nooner at Big's apartment can't hurt, right? Too bad his wife, Natasha (Bridget Moynahan), comes home early, catches Carrie, then falls and breaks a tooth running after the little home-wrecker.

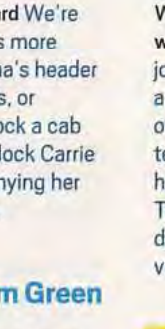
Sex and the City

Why It's Awkward We're not sure what's more painful: Natasha's header down the stairs, or watching her lock a cab door to try to block Carrie from accompanying her to the hospital.

14. The Tom Green Show

Season 2, Episode 5 (1999)

The Moment The man of a thousand pranks (Tom humps moose roadkill! Paints his parents' house plaid!) stealthily trails a pizza delivery guy and then tries to undercut him in front of his customers with another pizza and a tackle box of toppings. Even after he's profanely told to take a hike—and one of the irritated customers kicks over the tackle box—Green keeps pushing his pie, right up until he's chased away by the hammer-wielding customer.



Why It's Awkward Although you can cut the tension with a pizza wheel, Green ignores all obvious danger signs, ultimately provoking a dude to come after him *with a hammer*.

15. Cheers

Episode: "The Days of Wine and Neuroses" (1991)

The Moment On the eve of finally marrying her dream ex-millionaire, Robin Colcord (Roger Rees), Rebecca (Kirstie Alley) gets sloshed and tries to woo Sam (Ted Danson) with a serenade of "We've Got Tonight." Looking at Rebecca's ratty bathrobe and dangling cigarette, Sam demures, "First of all...a gentleman has rules. And second, you're kind of repulsive right now."

Why It's Awkward Alley's Rebecca joined the show in '87 as a humorless hard-ass, but over the years the character got more and more hopeless and hilarious. This '91 episode was her delightfully pathetic (or vice versa) low point.

16. Dog Bites Man

Episode: "Gas Prices" (2006)

The Moment: This short-lived Comedy Central series from *Ali G* producer Dan Mazer featured a local news team preying on oblivious participants. Here, nerdy assistant Marty (A.D. Miles) moonlights as a horrific comedian, stunning a real audience into silence with an endless string of lame sound effects and botched catchphrases. ("I'm sorry, I didn't get the memo!")

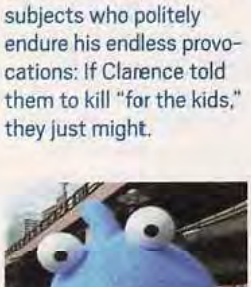
Why It's Awkward As if the brutal bombing wasn't excruciating enough, backstage he bats away a talent agent's frank criticism, convinced that making more sound effects will win her over.

17. Wonder Showzen

Episode: "Patience" (2005)

The Moment Proving that even a cuddly puppet can make people's heads explode if he's annoying enough, fuzzy blue Clarence confuses and enrages his interviewees by asking them to tell kids "it's important to be patient" and then interrupts until his subjects lose theirs. Kermit never had someone take a roundhouse kick at him or scream for the cops.

Why It's Awkward Even more unnerving than watching a puppet provoke violent outbursts in the name of teaching children? Those nervous subjects who politely endure his endless provocations: If Clarence told them to kill "for the kids," they just might.


Wonder Showzen

Written by Jennifer Armstrong, Henry Goldblatt, Jeff Jensen, Dalton Ross, Dan Snierson, Ken Tucker, Alynda Wheat, Josh Wolk

THE COMEBACK: JOHN P. JOHNSON; GREEN: STEVEN DEWALL/RETNA; ALLEY: NBCU PHOTO BANK; DOG BITES MAN: IAN WHITE

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The Revenge of Jason

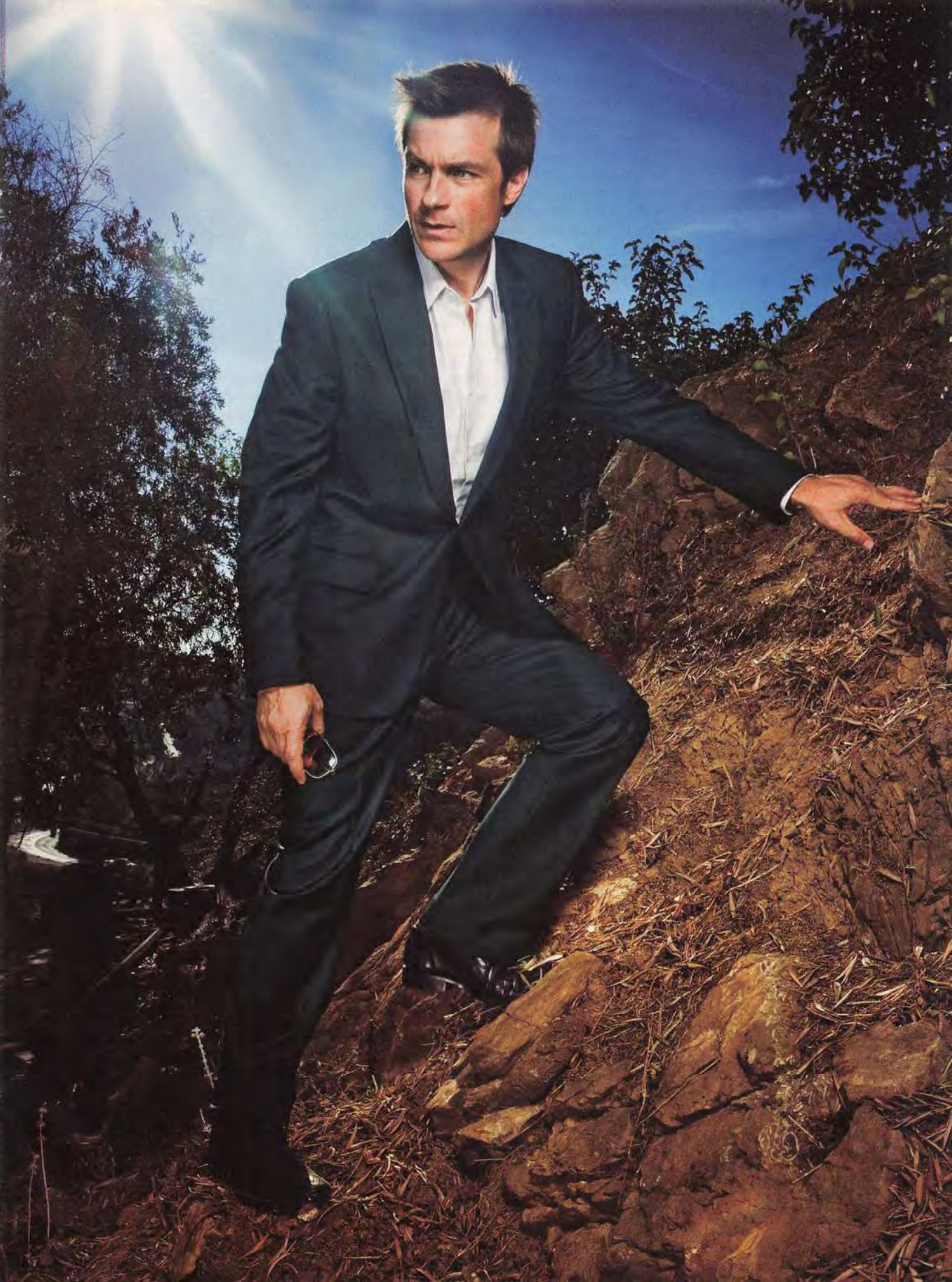
Jason Bateman was hilarious on Arrested Development, may it rest in peace. Now he's back and quietly reinventing himself as a movie star. First up, a surprisingly dramatic turn in The Kingdom. By Dave Karger

Jason Bateman spent the 1990s in fear of cocktail parties. After becoming a pinup in the '80s thanks to his dimply turns on the big (*Teen Wolf Too*) and small (*Silver Spoons*) screens, he often found himself at Hollywood social gatherings facing the same dilemma. "People, out of politeness or genuine curiosity, would say, 'Hey, what are you up to?'" he says. "You can either say, 'Oh, nothing!' or you can risk sounding defensive and start rattling off what your résumé has looked like for the past couple of months." At that time, his CV consisted mainly of some crappy TV movie or a sitcom pilot with no chance in hell. Bateman's response to inquisitive partygoers? "I basically went, 'F--- it' and started saying, 'Nothin'! Just hangin' out! Doin' a lot of going out at night and playin' a lot of golf.' You start to see their eyes drifting around the room for someone bigger and better to talk to."

A decade later, Bateman is the party guest everyone's hoping for. Since the demise of his Emmy-winning series *Arrested Development* last year, Bateman, 38, has lined up juicy roles in five big-ticket features, starting with the Middle East thriller *The Kingdom*, in which he, as intelligence analyst Adam Leavitt, provides much-needed comic relief as well as the film's biggest narrative jolt.

The role was the result of last winter's crime comedy *Smokin' Aces*, in which Bateman had a bit part opposite *Kingdom* director Peter Berg as a cold-sore-laden attorney locked up in a Vegas hotel. "Bateman had a monologue that was so funny we were all literally chewing on the insides of our mouths not to laugh," Berg recalls of the scene, which also featured Ben Affleck. "I was bleeding I was biting my mouth so hard. That's when I really felt the full impact of his talent." With *The Kingdom*, Berg aimed to use Bateman's smart-aleck skills for a different end. "He's a master of sarcasm, and I always find that not so deep underneath that

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL MUELLER



The Last Laugh

'Arrested Development' father-son duo Jason Bateman and Michael Cera costar in the upcoming comedy 'Juno.' They joined EW's Dave Karger at this month's Toronto Film Festival for a "Just a Minute" chat. See the wry results at ew.com/bateman.

EW.com
Anyone who reads the cast list gets very excited, thinking it's an 'Arrested Development' reunion, and yet you don't have a single scene together.

Bateman
That would have cost them extra. They could not afford that.

EW.com
Which one of you signed on to the movie first?

Bateman
[Pointing to Cera] This guy.

Cera
Uh, I was already filming, actually.

Bateman
Well, you don't have to rub it in. Some guy fell out, and they called me, and I was watering my lawn. I said, "Okeydoke."

EW.com
And the fact that Cera was already in it, was that a plus or a minus?

Bateman
Yes.

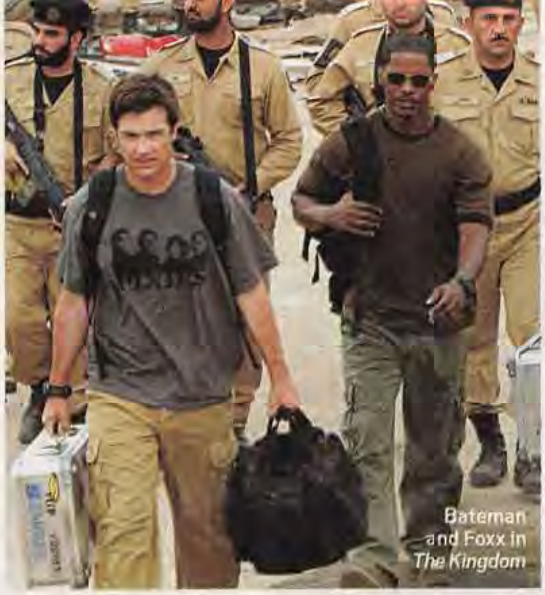
sarcasm lies pretty raw emotion," the director says. "I thought it would be interesting to take that persona and introduce it to genuinely horrific situations."

Filming *The Kingdom*, in which a team of FBI agents travels to Saudi Arabia to investigate a deadly terrorist bombing, involved three major firsts for Bateman. To begin with, it was shot in the hardly cushy locales of Abu Dhabi and Arizona. "I'm a guy who'd much rather freeze than sweat," he says. "We had this long sequence on this closed-down highway. It was 140 degrees for two weeks. It was hell." Then there was the live falcon that served as his costar in one scene. "It was surprisingly stinky," he reports. "You don't expect falcons to smell like ass, but they do. They're not showerers." Most notably, since his character finds himself in harrowing circumstances, *The Kingdom* called for Bateman to do something he's never had to before: play visceral, white-knuckle fear. But he didn't exactly break out the Method. "I just try to do what I see other actors I like do," he says with typical self-deprecation. "I mean, you could do it too. Acting's not that tough."

Considering the professional roller-coaster ride Bateman's been on, faking a bit of terror must have seemed like a snap. The son of a TV director-producer and a flight attendant—and, of course, the little brother of *Family Ties* star Justine—Jason got his start in 1981 at age 12 as adopted son James Cooper Ingalls on *Little House on the Prairie*. Major roles on sitcoms *Silver Spoons* and *The Hogan Family*—and in that *Teen Wolf* sequel—meant forgoing a normal childhood, so when his *Tiger Beat* days ended in 1991, Bateman embarked on something of a late adolescence. "Basically my whole 20s were a lot of drinking, a lot of drugs—there wasn't a whole lot of ambition," he says, sitting on a hotel balcony in Toronto, where his upcoming indie *Juno* was the crowd-pleaser of the film festival (see sidebar). "Feature scripts—not that there were that many—were basically scrap paper for messages. I was definitely in a place of depression, a little upset at myself for making such a big commitment to a career that I didn't have control over."

"I just try to do what I see other actors I like do. I mean, you could do it too. Acting's not that tough."

In 1998, Bateman began dating childhood acquaintance Amanda Anka, daughter of singer-songwriter Paul. Soon after the couple married in 2001, the actor scored the role of exasperated dad Michael Bluth on *Arrested Development*, a show that would spark a cult following and a career comeback before getting canceled after three seasons. Rather than capitalize upon the career boost and seek out starring roles in silly comedies, he's chosen smaller parts in more substantial projects. "We're trying to not screw this whole thing up by taking the wrong comedy too soon. If I want to be above the title, it's probably going to be a s---ty film," he explains.



Bateman and Foxx in *The Kingdom*

"And then I'm going to be selling oranges and peanuts on freeway off-ramps pretty soon."

As a result, his *Kingdom* costars Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Garner, and Chris Cooper occupy all the above-the-title real estate, while Bateman, despite his pivotal role, is virtually MIA even from the film's TV spots. "It truly is okay in that I want to be around for a long time," he insists. "If you're on top, there's really only one place to go. If you look at this transition from TV to film like I am, then I've sort of graduated from TV and now I'm a freshman in film. Now that I've got another flash of relevancy, I don't want to screw it up. I don't want my name to get in my way again, which for a long time, unfortunately, it was."

These days, his name is hardly a liability. Besides starring in *Juno*, he'll appear this fall in the Dustin Hoffman fantasy *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*. He also just reteamed with Berg for the superhero comedy *Hancock* opposite Will Smith, and he'll soon begin shooting the political drama *State of Play* with Brad Pitt and Edward Norton. And there's always the hope for an *Arrested Development* movie. "It's something that we all talk about on e-mails," he says. "If they make a deal, the principals are interested."

Whatever happens, it seems that the Hollywood powers that be are once again on his side. "Jason's one of the greatest examples of how unpredictable an acting career can be," says Berg. "There aren't a lot of guys that've been able to survive as long as he has—and he's entering his 40s completely reinvented." The surest sign of Bateman's stability? He and Anka welcomed daughter Francesca last October. "I really made sure that a lot of things in my life were ready for when I would get the adult thing: the wife, the child, the career," he says. "Not drinking, not doing drugs, getting up early, exercising, and putting my mind 10 years ahead, being really clear on where I want to be. And it's happening. And I want to try to keep the car on the road." ■

BATEMAN AND CERA: JASON ANERETT/EW; THE KINGDOM: FRANK CONNOR

Living with Bipolar Disorder Takes Understanding:

where you've been

You've spent years trying to manage the extreme ups and downs with mood swings and relapses.

where you want to be

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the ABILIFY experience

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Individual results may vary.
***Significant weight gain: ABILIFY 3%, sugar pill 2%.**

What important information about ABILIFY do I need to know?
Elderly patients diagnosed with psychosis as a result of dementia (for example, an inability to perform daily activities as a result of increased memory loss), and who are treated with atypical antipsychotic medicines including ABILIFY, are at an increased risk of death when compared to patients who are treated with a placebo (sugar pill). ABILIFY is not approved for the treatment of patients with dementia-related psychosis.

Serious side effects can occur with any antipsychotic medicine, including ABILIFY. Tell your doctor or healthcare professional right away if you have or develop any conditions or side effects, such as:

- Very high fever, rigid muscles, shaking, confusion, sweating, or increased heart rate and blood pressure may be signs of neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS), which is rare but potentially fatal
- Abnormal or uncontrollable facial movements may be signs of tardive dyskinesia (TD), which may be permanent
- If you are elderly, an increased risk of stroke or ministroke has been reported in clinical trials for elderly patients with dementia
- If you have diabetes, risk factors for, or symptoms of diabetes, increases in blood sugar levels have been reported with medicines like ABILIFY. In some cases these were serious and resulted in coma or death
- If you have lightheadedness upon standing, seizures, trouble swallowing, or suicidal thoughts

It's important to tell your healthcare professional about all the medicines you're taking, since there are some risks for drug interactions with ABILIFY.

You should avoid alcohol while taking ABILIFY.

ABILIFY can affect your judgment or motor skills. Until you know how it affects you, you should not operate machinery or drive.

What are the most common side effects of ABILIFY?
Common side effects include: headache, anxiety, insomnia, nausea, vomiting, constipation, dizziness, upset stomach, and an inner sense of restlessness or need to move (akathisia).

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(aripiprazole)
TABLETS and ORAL SOLUTION 1 mg/mL

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ABILIFY

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ABILIFY is a prescription medicine used to treat patients with an acute manic or mixed episode associated with Bipolar I Disorder and for maintaining efficacy in these patients who have been stabilized and then maintained for at least six weeks.

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Bipolar I Disorder is an illness with symptoms thought to be caused by an imbalance of brain chemicals. People who have Bipolar I Disorder tend to experience extreme mood swings, along with other specific symptoms and behaviors. These mood swings, or "episodes," can take three forms: manic, depressive, or mixed episodes. Common symptoms of a manic episode are: feeling extremely happy, being very irritable and anxious, talking too fast and too much, and having more energy and needing less sleep than usual. Common symptoms of a depressive episode include: feelings of overwhelming sadness or emptiness, low energy, a loss of interest in things, trouble concentrating, changes in sleep or appetite, and thoughts of dying or suicide. A mixed episode includes symptoms that are both manic and depressive.

Who should not take ABILIFY?
People who are allergic to ABILIFY or to any substance that is in it. Please talk with your doctor or healthcare professional.

What important information should I know about ABILIFY?
Elderly patients, diagnosed with psychosis as a result of dementia (for example, an inability to perform daily activities as a result of increased memory loss), and who are treated with atypical antipsychotic medicines including ABILIFY, are at an increased risk of death when compared to patients who are treated with a placebo (sugar pill). ABILIFY is not approved for the treatment of patients with dementia-related psychosis.

Serious side effects can occur with any antipsychotic medicine, including ABILIFY. Tell your doctor or healthcare professional right away if you have any conditions or side effects, including the following:

Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS): Very high fever, rigid muscles, shaking, confusion, sweating, or increased heart rate and blood pressure **may be signs of NMS, a rare but serious side effect that could be fatal.**

Tardive dyskinesia (TD): Abnormal or uncontrollable facial movements may be signs of a serious condition known as TD, which may be permanent.

Elderly patients with dementia: An increased risk of stroke and ministroke has been reported in a clinical study of elderly patients with dementia (for example, increased memory loss and inability to perform daily activities). ABILIFY is not approved for treating patients with dementia.

High blood sugar and diabetes: Patients with diabetes and those having risk factors for diabetes (for example, obesity, family history of diabetes), as well as those with symptoms such as unexpected increases in thirst, urination, or hunger should have their blood sugar levels checked before and during treatment. Increases in blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia), in some cases serious and associated with coma or death, have been reported in patients taking medicines like ABILIFY.

Orthostatic hypotension: Lightheadedness or faintness caused by a sudden change in heart rate and blood pressure when rising too quickly from a sitting or lying position (orthostatic hypotension) has been reported with ABILIFY.

Dysphagia: Medicines like ABILIFY have been associated with swallowing problems (dysphagia). If you had or have swallowing problems, you should tell your doctor or healthcare professional.

Suicidal thoughts: If you have suicidal thoughts, you should tell your doctor or healthcare professional right away.

What should I tell my doctor or healthcare professional before I start taking ABILIFY (aripiprazole)?
Information about your overall health, and any medical problems you may have, such as:
- Whether you're taking any other prescription or nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines
- Whether you're pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding
- If you or anyone in your family has had seizures
- If you or anyone in your family has had high blood sugar or diabetes

What should I avoid when taking ABILIFY?
- Avoid overheating and dehydration
- Avoid driving or operating hazardous machinery until you know how ABILIFY affects you
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Avoid breast-feeding an infant

What are the common side effects of ABILIFY?
Common side effects include: headache, anxiety, insomnia, nausea, vomiting, constipation, dizziness, upset stomach, and an inner sense of restlessness or need to move (akathisia).

What percentage of people stopped taking ABILIFY due to side effects?
In clinical trials, the percentage of people who discontinued taking ABILIFY due to side effects was similar for patients treated with ABILIFY (11%) and for patients treated with sugar pill (9%).

Can I safely take ABILIFY while I'm taking other medications?
ABILIFY can be taken with most drugs; however, taking ABILIFY with some medicines may require your doctor or healthcare professional to adjust the dosage of ABILIFY.

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- ketoconazole (NIZORAL®)
- quinidine (QUINIDEX®)
- fluoxetine (PROZAC®)
- paroxetine (PAXIL®)
- carbamazepine (TEGRETOL®)

It is important to tell your doctor or healthcare professional about all the medicines you're taking, just to be sure.

General Information:
- ABILIFY is usually taken once a day, with or without food
- ABILIFY should be kept out of the reach of children and pets
- Store ABILIFY Tablets and the Oral Solution at room temperature
- For patients who must limit their sugar intake, be aware that **ABILIFY Oral Solution contains sugar**
- For patients who cannot metabolize phenylalanine (those with phenylketonuria or PKU), **ABILIFY® DISCMELT™ contains phenylalanine**
- If you have additional questions, talk to your doctor or healthcare professional

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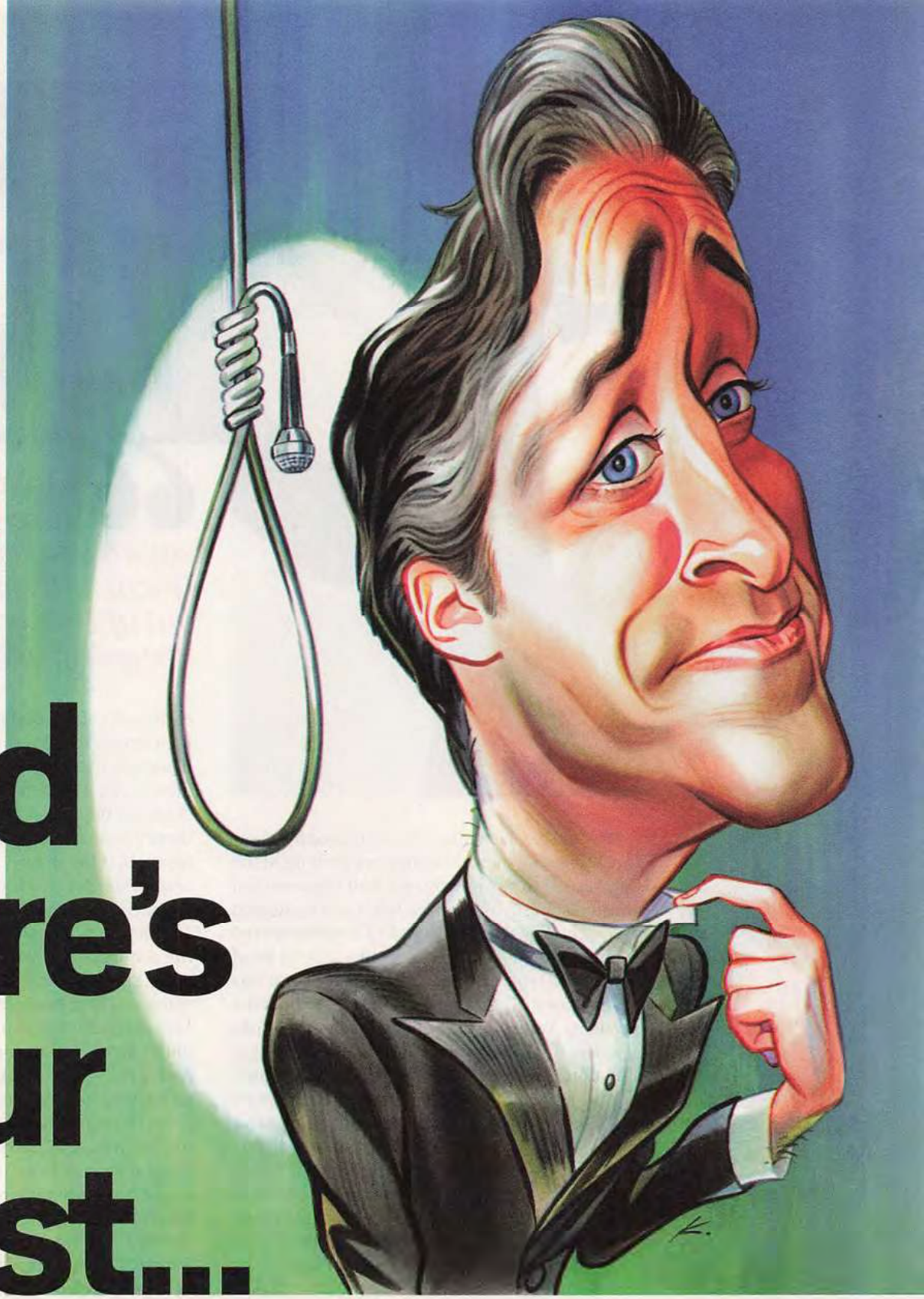
Jon Stewart has agreed to emcee the Oscars again. Why are comedians still willing to tackle one of the most thankless jobs in Hollywood?

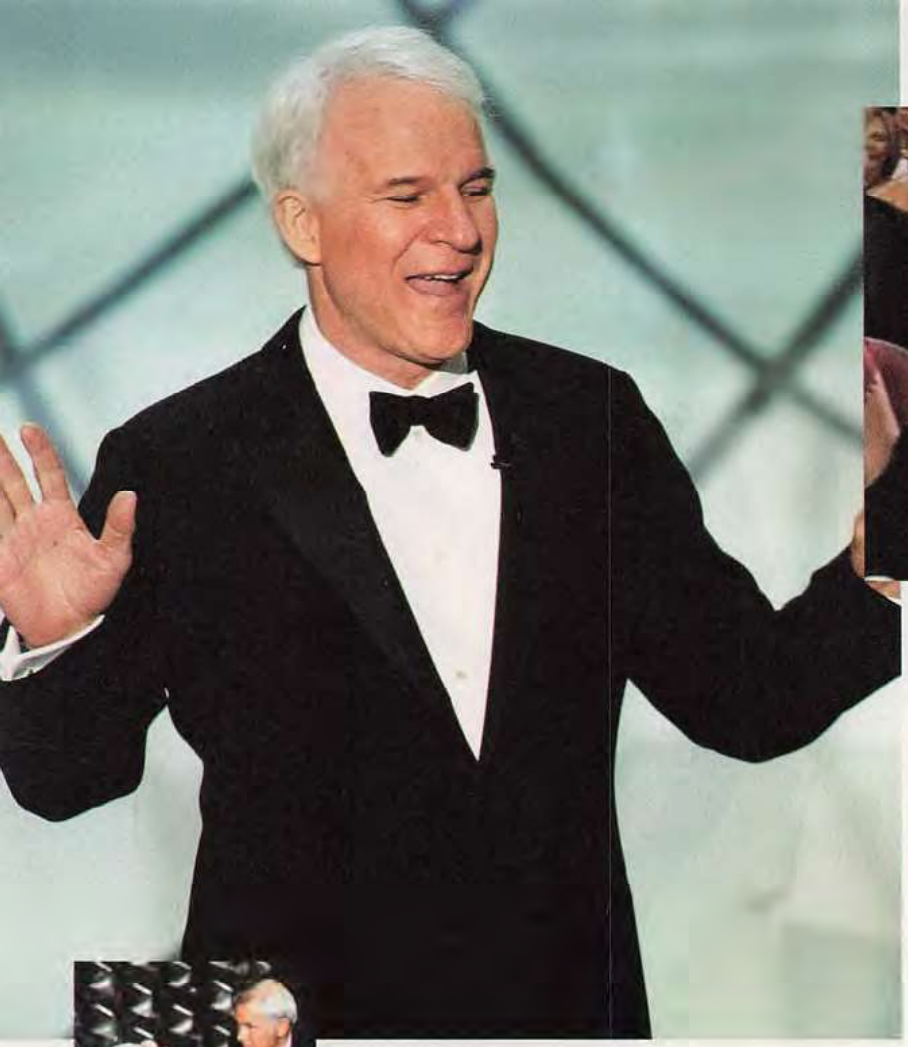
by Lynette Rice

And Here's Your Host...



A few weeks ago, when the Academy announced that Jon Stewart would return as host for the Oscars ceremony on Feb. 24, 2008, Hollywood was a little perplexed. The last time Stewart emceed the event, in 2006, critics wrote off his performance as "smug" and "tiresome" and blamed the show's poor ratings—38.9 million, the second-lowest viewership since 1987—largely on him. Even Stewart himself seemed a little shocked to be invited back. "I'm thrilled to be asked to host the Academy Awards for a second time," he said in a statement. "Because, as they say, the third time's a charm."

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KASCHT



"Hosting is "a lose-lose situation," says a source close to the Oscars. "Ninety-nine times out of 100, critics are going to hate you."

(From top right) DeGeneres hosting this year, Martin in 2003, Carson in 1980, Crystal in 2000, and Hope in 1978

It would be—if anyone actually hosted the show three times anymore. Standing center stage at the Oscars used to be a prestige gig. Bob Hope emceed an astonishing 18 ceremonies. Billy Crystal presided over eight. Five-time vet Johnny Carson delivered opening-monologue bons mots like "I see a lot of new faces, especially on the old faces" and was beloved for it. Today, asking someone to host the Academy Awards is like asking him to be a piñata at a 5-year-old's birthday party. "It's a lose-lose situation," says a source close to the Oscars. "Ninety-nine times out of 100, critics are going to hate you. They *want* to hate you. They don't like awards shows. The show is too long...and you were barely in it. I can't believe anybody agrees to do it." Today, the elegance of the Oscar stage is marred by slip-sliding ratings, relentless abuse from bloggers, and the pressure of knowing that a passel of FCC suits sits huddled around the censor button. In short, hosting the Oscars may be the most thankless job in Hollywood. "Being married to Elizabeth Taylor used to have that distinction," says veteran Oscar writer Bruce Vilanch. "Now it's hosting the Academy Awards."

So why does anyone do it? Certainly not for the money. "There's no huge asking price," says one network executive. "They get paid [a fee] that, in their world, is insignificant." Oscar hosts—like their counterparts at the Emmys and Grammys—rarely earn north of $15,000 plus expenses, and fees for their writing staff. Presumably, this pittance is worth it because it gives the host exposure to a global audience who will then go on to watch the host's TV shows or buy tickets to his or her movies. Sadly, there's little evidence that it works. The Academy boasts that the show is seen by one billion people worldwide. But only 100,000 new viewers tuned in to watch Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show* the year after he hosted the Oscars. (For those of you doing the math, that's .01 percent of the Oscar audience.) Sure, Ellen DeGeneres parlayed the goodwill she generated from hosting the 2001 Emmys into a successful talk show, but hosting the Oscars this year didn't make her any bigger than she already was. And as David Letterman and Whoopi Goldberg can attest, the job is fraught with peril. (See sidebar.)

An Oscar host's jokes must be "inside" enough for the industry crowd sitting in the theater, and general enough to amuse the hordes watching at home. You have to be sharp without being cruel. Smart without being elitist. And walk an impossible tightrope between being too edgy and too nice. Stewart got slapped for sheathing his political sword. "For people who watched him on *The Daily Show*, no, he didn't do well, because he couldn't give them what they wanted," Vilanch says. "But his show has a million people, as opposed to 38 million people [in the U.S.] who probably had never seen him before and thought he was very engaging."

Even if the host manages to hit the right tone, there still may be trouble ahead. It turns out that Hollywood's most beautiful people are a tough crowd. For one thing, an Oscar audience isn't there

MARTIN: JOHN LAZAR/LADN/WIREIMAGE.COM; CARSON, HOPE: ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES; CRYSTAL: M. GOULDING/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/CORBIS SYGMA

to laugh. They're there to win. "They're going to be really happy to see you for a minute and then it's going to be, like, 'Okay, could you just finish now? You're in the way of my career,'" Vilanch says. "The most important thing to remember as the evening goes on is that for every winner there are four losers, and you're just an obstacle between them and their revenge."

Finding a host who can pull all of this off is so difficult that the Golden Globes (and occasionally the Grammy Awards) just skip the host altogether and have the performers do the talking. But that comes with its own dangers. (Not to pick on Elizabeth Taylor, but if you missed her struggling to announce *Gladiator* as a Golden Globe best-drama winner in 2001, consider yourself blessed.) "These shows are live," says the network executive. "You don't want to send some actor out there as a presenter looking like a deer in headlights."

Or a lamb to the slaughter. Proving the adage that no good deed goes unpunished, Oscar hosts can pull off a gaffe-free show (thank you, Steve Martin) and *still* get blamed for its sagging ratings. In fact, viewership has more to do with the movies and stars that are nominated than anything that happens on the stage of the Kodak Theatre. When *Titanic* won 11 Oscars in 1998, the show drew a massive 55 million viewers. It has yet to regain that peak, thanks to an Academy pattern, in recent years, of nominating art-house films instead of blockbusters (*The Lord of the Rings* being the exception). Still, the hosts get dinged for the slump. "It's absolutely unfair," says veteran Oscar producer Gil Cates. "There are hardcore fans who will watch the Oscars regardless of who hosts, and there are fans who watch the show because they are invested in a certain film. That's 90 percent of the reason why the ratings fluctuate. It's got very little to do with the host."

So why are folks like Stewart willing to step back into the buzz saw? Maybe it's naive optimism. Maybe it's masochism. Or perhaps it's a sense of history and the pride of guiding the biggest awards show on the planet. Even with all the negatives, it's still the Academy Awards, which draws an audience second only to the Super Bowl. You're not gonna get that kind of gravitas hosting the Shatner roast on Comedy Central. "It's a badge of honor to get the Oscars," says the source close to the show. "You're in select company. Everybody wants to be Johnny Carson."

Stewart may not want to beat Carson's record (or even try for that third-time charm), but chatting with EW after the Emmys—where he, Steve Carell, and Stephen Colbert brought down the house while accepting an award for Ricky Gervais—Stewart didn't seem to realize that he'd just signed on for Hollywood's most thankless job. In fact, he seemed kinda happy about it. "I had a ball last time," he says. "It's sort of like a week in Oz. I mean, it's work, but it's not digging ditches." ■ *(Additional reporting by Josh Rottenberg and Whitney Pastorek)*

Bombs Away

Hosting the Oscars can't really kill your career, but when a gag flops in front of Hollywood's elite, the vultures swoop in. Here's a look at some memorable gaffes in emcee history. —*Sean Smith*

Jerry Lewis, 1959

DANCING WITH THE STARS, THE PREQUEL It seems impossible, but once upon a time the Oscars actually ended too *early*. Cohost Lewis had to find a way to fill about 20 minutes of screen time. His solution? To drag actors up on stage and make them sing and dance. We're sure they hated it as much as the audience did.

Chevy Chase, 1988

YOU LOST THEM AT HELLO Chase strode onto the Shrine Auditorium stage and greeted the audience with "Good evening, Hollywood phonies." Hollywood loves to laugh. But at themselves? He'd have had better luck with a gag about starving kids in Africa. Chase never hosted again.

David Letterman, 1995

DUDE, THEY'VE MET Letterman did a semi-comical but slightly tone-deaf riff about introducing Uma Thurman to Oprah Winfrey: "Oprah, Uma. Uma, Oprah." It didn't go over well, so he kept doing it. Again. And again. And again. And introduced himself to the list of Oscar hosts who never got invited back.

Whoopi Goldberg, 1996

DOES ANYONE SMELL GAS? Whoopi, God bless her, has never cared much for subtlety. After Vanessa Williams performed the Oscar-nominated song from *Pocahontas*, "Colors of the Wind," Goldberg took the stage and cracked, "The question I really want to answer: What color is my wind?" Um, ick.

Chris Rock, 2005

MURPHY'S LAW Rock pushed the wrong buttons when, while riffing about Hollywood being out of touch with the mainstream, he asked, "Who is Jude Law?" The audience blanched, and so did Law's *All the King's Men* costar Sean Penn. Penn defended Law later in the show, and he and Rock hugged backstage, but the damage was done.

LEWIS: EVERETT COLLECTION; CHASE: REED SAXON/AP; LETTERMAN: MICHAEL CAULFIELD/AP; GOLDBERG: ERIC DRAPER/AP; ROCK: MARK J. TERRILL/AP

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THE MUST LIST

Ten Things We Love This Week

1. ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES

You can't help but mosey up to Brad Pitt (above) and Casey Affleck in this stunning new Western, an illuminating take on a timeworn genre and an American legend's sorrowful demise.

7. GOSSIP GIRL

It's little more than snotty rich kids on parade, but The CW's catty, Upper East Side teen drama—led by magnetic It Girl Serena (Blake Lively, left)—is both tawdry and tantalizing.

8. INTO THE WILD

In Sean Penn's beautiful and confounding film, a twentysomething wanderer (Emile Hirsch) shrugs off life's comforts in search of the great wide open.

9. THE SHEPHERD'S DOG, Iron and Wine

A trippy tour through Sam Beam's experimental folk-music lab (want some dub reggae with your backmasked guitar? Okay!) yields a tranquil winner.

2. THE WORLD HAS MADE ME THE MAN OF MY DREAMS, Meshell Ndegeocello

With the help of some jazz-MVP special guests, the emotive bassist delivers a funky, meditative album that blends soul, punk, and passion.

3. THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF IMMATURITY

Because page 186 gives instructions on how to bounce a doughnut. 'Nuff said.

4. BROTHERHOOD

If you like your labyrinthine Mob tales with a bit of an Irish brogue, give Showtime's crime- and character-driven drama a shot. (Pun intended.)

5. BUG

The unrelenting thriller—starring a stellar Ashley Judd (above, with Harry Connick Jr.) on a descent into madness—is even more haunting on DVD.

6. 'COMMANDO DIRECTOR'S CUT' DVD

More violence, more testosterone, more Ah-nuld: The '80s "classic" is back, now longer, with an arsenal of new extras.

READER'S CHOICE

SEND YOUR PICKS TO **EW.COM**

10. FRISKY DINGO

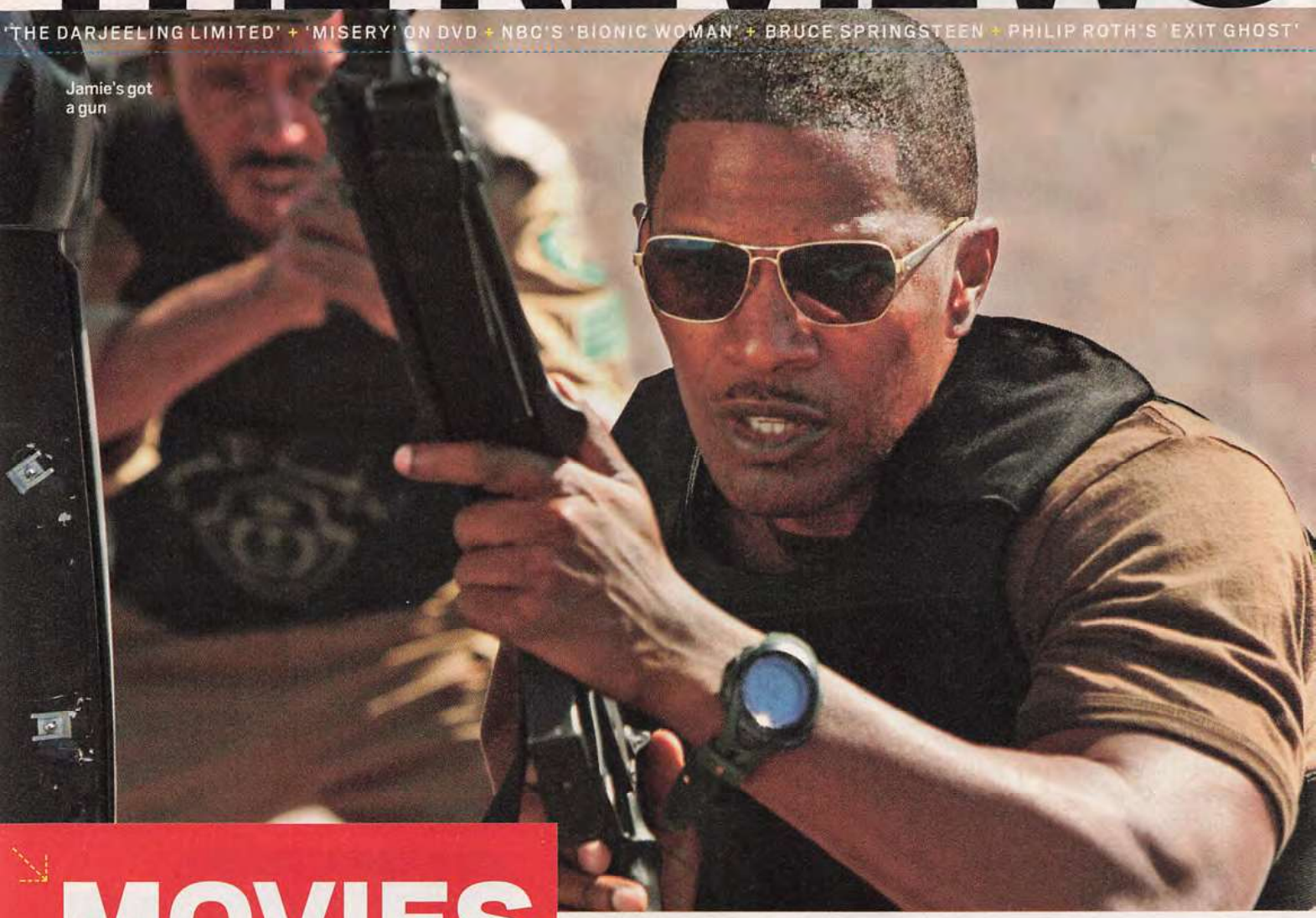
Are they superhero enemies or corporate foes? Both! The side-splitting Adult Swim cartoon spoofs till it hurts.

Submitted by Aaron Fullerton

THE ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES BY THE COWARD ROBERT FORD: KIMBERLY FRENCH/BUG: ANTHONY RIEDIN; COMMANDO: EVERETT COLLECTION; GOSSIP GIRL: ANDREW TECCES

THE REVIEWS

'THE DARJEELING LIMITED' + 'MISERY' ON DVD + NBC'S 'BIONIC WOMAN' + BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN + PHILIP ROTH'S 'EXIT GHOST'



Jamie's got a gun

FRANK CONNOR

MOVIES

Mission: Implausible

A simplistic action flick wields big guns and small ideas as FBI agents chase terrorists around Saudi Arabia.

BY LISA SCHWARZBAUM

The Kingdom
Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Garner, Chris Cooper
R, 111 mins. (Universal)

The opening credits of *The Kingdom*—as in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia—provide a crash course, literally, in the history of U.S.-Saudi relations. Frantic music pounds as archival images flash in a pulsing collage. Then *BOOM*, there's an animated black silhouette of an airplane slamming into one of two towers. Then *WHAM*, the prologue gives way to the fictional present-day sight of Americans and other Western oil-company employees, cavorting with the full swagger of Yankee-centric innocence on the playing fields of a gated Riyadh housing complex—lots of green lawns, lots of baseballs tossed around, lots of heartland-values signifiers.

Then *BANG*, unknown gunmen in a moving vehicle begin mowing down the crowd with a spray of bullets. And *BLAM*, a bomb goes off.

Chaos follows, and death. Could this be the work of the elusive Saudi terrorist mastermind who goes by the name of...well, why not call him Mosama bin Faden? So shameless is *The Kingdom*, ignoring consequence and treating its audience like cash-dispensing machines with buttons to be pushed rather than thinking individuals willing to consider the reality of America's entanglement with the Middle East.

So *PRESTO*, FBI Special Agent Ronald Fleury (Jamie Foxx) is interrupted at a kindergarten (where he's scoring major Daddy Points as a visitor in his kid's class) by an SOS call from an FBI buddy on the scene. Foolish, crud-flinging, irresponsible action pictures such as this one love to establish righteous ass-kickers like Fleury as secret softies before the crud is really flung. In a click or two—and against the orders of mealier governmental types—Daddy has gone commando, signing up three fellow elite go-getters to join him in Riyadh with a secret mission to find that unfindable Saudi Darth Vader. One (Chris Cooper) is a good ol' boy who knows about bombs; another (Jennifer Garner) knows about forensics but apparently has never heard that foulmouthed, lollipop-sucking, basketball-bouncing young women who wear tight tank tops aren't exactly dressed for success in severely Muslim Saudi Arabia; and a wisecracking third (Jason Bateman) knows about this thing called the Internet (his colleagues still haven't twigged to websites) but was apparently absent the day FBI classmates learned that people with Jewish-sounding surnames and Israeli stamps in their passports aren't the best candidates for stealth jobs in the Middle East.

Perhaps reflecting the real-world lack of trained linguists on the government payroll, none speak Arabic. (Perhaps the oversight is just more movie lameness.) But all of them fight and shoot guns real good. And that, in the end, is deemed readiness enough for the movie's crude purposes. Anyhow, no one interested in giving the story a second thought will be able to figure out what those purposes really are, aside from opportunistic entertainment. As the bomb pro sloshes through a pool of mud in search of clues about the explosives and the forensics babe picks shrapnel out of a dead body, we appear to be on *CSI* terrain. When Jeremy Piven shows up as an oily State Department yes-man, exuding Ari Gold-en insincerity, the movie takes a lazy, distractingly comedic turn toward *Entourage*. A subplot involving Bateman is so brazen in its theft of images forever associated with the hideous killing of journalist Daniel Pearl that a decent person might look away in disgust. The sight of a masked gunman on a balcony evokes the Munich Olympic massacre of 1972, but for no good reason.

Ashraf Barhom and Ali Suliman, the stars of the infinitely more compelling *Paradise Now*, are standouts as two Saudi cops of impeccable honor, but their inclusion feels like a math solution on the worksheet of screenwriter Matthew Michael Carnahan (*State of Play*) rather than an essential counterpoint to the FBI side of the story. And all the pieties about how innocent little children can be turned into the next generation of enemies, and how all daddies—American, Saudi, and even terrorist monster—love their tots, add up to nothing more than vapid chatter.

The Kingdom is directed by Peter Berg (*Friday Night Lights*), an actor-turned-filmmaker with a notably crisp, confident visual style usually well suited to restless action. Here, he sometimes lingers in close-up over the pleasing composition of his movie stars' faces, admiring them like glamorous fashion ads inserted between flailing action sequences. Why? Maybe to give himself a break from the futility of his mission. **C–**

Garner gives us the slip

Backstory

+ Determined to avoid stereotypes, director Peter Berg turned to Jack Shaheen's 2001 book *Reel Bad Arabs*, a look at cinematic bungling of Middle Eastern characters. As the director puts it, "I don't think any filmmaker is in the business of turning people off."

CRITICAL MASS

A sampling of critics from across the country grade 10 current releases.

	TY BURR *Boston Globe*	LISA KENNEDY *The Denver Post*	LIAM LACEY *Toronto Globe and Mail*	MICK LASALLE *San Francisco Chronicle*	JACK MATHEWS *N.Y. Daily News*	TODD McCARTHY *Variety*	CLAUDIA PUIG *USA Today*	CARRIE RICKEY *The Philadelphia Inquirer*	RENE RODRIGUEZ *The Miami Herald*	STEPHANIE ZACHAREK *Salon.com*	ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	EW READERS*	CRITICS' AVERAGE
ACROSS THE UNIVERSE	C–	A–	B+	–	B–	B–	C+	A–	B	–	C–	B	B–
THE ASSASSINATION OF...	–	A–	–	–	B+	A	A	–	–	D	A	B–	B+
▲ THE BRAVE ONE	C+	B+	C	C+	C+	C+	B–	C	C+	C	C+	B	C+
EASTERN PROMISES	A–	A	A	B	B+	A–	B+	B+	B+	C	B	B+	B+
IN THE SHADOW OF...	–	B+	A	–	B	B+	B+	A–	–	–	A	B–	A–
IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH	–	B–	B+	–	B–	C	A–	B	B–	D+	A	B–	B–
INTO THE WILD	–	B+	–	–	B	B	A–	–	B+	C–	A–	B	B
SHOOT 'EM UP	B–	–	C	C	B+	C	C	C	C+	D+	B+	B	C+
SUPERBAD	B+	B+	B+	A	B	B+	B+	B	B	B+	B	B+	B+
3:10 TO YUMA	B+	B	B	A	A–	B	B	A–	B+	B	B	A–	B+

*EW READER GRADES come from the Front Row, EW's online reader panel. If you'd like to join, go to frontrowpanel.com/join.

THE KINGDOM: FRANK CONNOR (2); THE BRAVE ONE: ABBOT GENSER

Brothers Grim

Wes Anderson's latest traces troubled siblings—and adult emotions.

BY LISA SCHWARZBAUM

Limited appeal: Wilson, Brody, and Schwartzman

JAMES HAMILTON

The Darjeeling Limited
Owen Wilson, Adrien Brody, Jason Schwartzman
R, 91 mins.
(Fox Searchlight)

Had blaring news of Owen Wilson's personal crisis not reached his public so close to the release of *The Darjeeling Limited*, Wes Anderson's picaresque story of three brothers (Wilson, Jason Schwartzman, and Adrien Brody) who carry their emotional baggage on a train voyage across India would still resonate with vivid sadness. His head outlandishly bandaged in contradiction with the insouciance of his surfer-blond hair, Wilson's character is the one sibling among the three who has actively tried to hurt himself in response to family unhappiness: Father is dead, and a drifty, self-absorbed mother (Anjelica Huston) ignores her sons while searching for her own bliss in a Himalayan nunnery. Now he is trying to reestablish kinship, and he's up against resistance. Estranged from one another, each son is a quirky piece of work in his own right; together on a train, they're a rolling family-therapy experiment.

This is familiar psychological as well as stylistic territory for Anderson after *Rushmore* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*. But there's a startling new maturity in *Darjeeling*, a compassion for the larger world that busts the confines of the filmmaker's miniaturist instincts. (A jolting, unironic plot turn may even shock.) I don't know which came first—inspiration provided by the beauty and complexity of India, or an attraction to India because of a wiser heart. But either way, foreign travel is a growth opportunity for these passengers. **B+**

"There's a new depth of maturity in *Darjeeling*, a compassion for the larger world that busts the confines of the filmmaker's miniaturistic instincts."

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The Game Plan

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Kyra Sedgwick
PG, 110 mins. (Walt Disney)

Having tamed one muscled man-child (Vin Diesel in *The Pacifier*), Disney sets its sights on The Rock. He preens winningly as Joe Kingman, a star quarterback with the kind of empty, Sharper Image-bachelor-pad life guys are supposed to crave, then deplore on cue when an adorable child (Madison Pettis) arrives. Said kid is Kingman's daughter (surprise result of some long-forgotten sayonara sex), and, oddly, she's not such a handful. The lesson seems to be, "Think you can't have it all? You can!" Which, as we know, is what parenting is all about. **C**—*Scott Brown*

Good Luck Chuck

Dane Cook, Jessica Alba
R, 96 mins. (Lionsgate)

Can we finally just admit that Dane Cook isn't funny? In a comedy so lame its plot could've been swiped from a Bazooka Joe wrapper, Cook plays a dentist with a curse: Each girl he dates winds up marrying the next guy she dates after him. Alba, who you'd think would know better, plays the klutzy dream girl who makes Cook's jackass want to be a better man. *Chuck* won't do Alba's career any favors. But who knows? By the film's own harebrained logic, maybe her next costar will be someone who can actually act. **F**—*Chris Nashawaty*

Sydney White

Amanda Bynes, Sara Paxton, Matt Long
PG-13, 100 mins. (Universal)

Revenge of the Nerds is way cooler in its proud defense of geekosity, no question. But anti-ditz role model Amanda Bynes just happens to be cute, the way she rolls her eyes and twists her lipglossy smile in this perky and chaste Y.A. update on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. As Sydney, a motherless plumber's daughter and college freshman rejected by her dream sorority's evil sisters, Bynes moves into loser campus housing with seven guy dorks and does great things. Like, fix the bathroom sink. And snag the campus prince. **B–**—*LS*

Feast of Love

Morgan Freeman, Greg Kinnear, Radha Mitchell
R, 102 mins. (MGM)

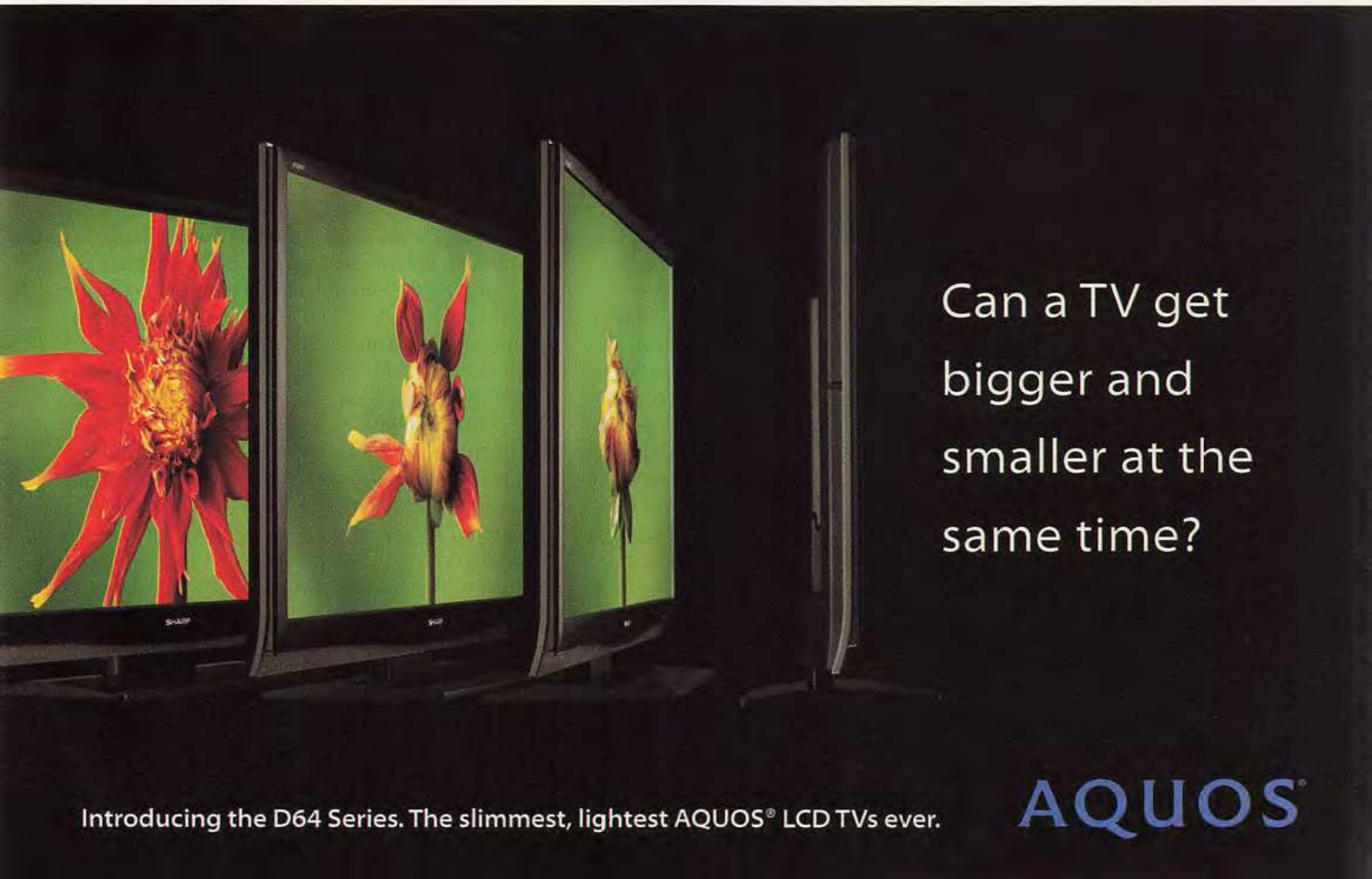
Robert Benton's bobos-in-love ensemble drama, adapted from the Charles Baxter college-town novel, is far too cloyingly pleased with its own humanity. Greg Kinnear, as a Portland coffee-bar owner who loses his wife (Selma Blair) to another woman, is the divorcé as sad-eyed puppy, and Morgan Freeman, as a professor recovering from the death of his son, lays on the life-affirming pensées. Radha Mitchell, playing a real estate agent trapped in a sordid affair, has vibrance, but the film wastes no time reducing her to another soddenly "innocent" romantic. **C**—*OG*

Resident Evil: Extinction

Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter, Mike Epps
R, 100 mins. (Screen Gems)

The title gives one hope: Could this be curtains for the stubbornly undead franchise? Unfortunately, *Extinction* plays like a flabby middle chapter, full of nerdy details (we practically get an org chart of the Umbrella Corporation, author of a globe-spanning zombie plague) but fraudulently short on the ruined Vegas-scape that ads have been promising. Our hero Alice (Jovovich, bioengineered for joyless, over-choreographed carnage) spends all of 10 minutes there—and she doesn't even visit a zombie casino! **C–**—*SB*

THE GAME PLAN: RON PHILLIPS; GOOD LUCK CHUCK: SERGEI BACHLAKOV; SYDNEY WHITE: GENE PAGE; FEAST OF LOVE: PETER SOREL; RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION: ROLF KONOW



Ask the Critic
OWEN GLEIBERMAN

Q How important is a movie's ending? —*Thomas*

A Even when a film is great, the end, if done right, can be more than icing on the cake; it can redefine the entire dessert. The greatest example is, of course, the revelation of Rosebud in the closing moments of *Citizen Kane*. Like all great endings, that one is really a beginning—an invitation to meditate on the hidden meaning of what we've just seen. Here are a few more: the last line of *Some Like It Hot*, in which Jack Lemmon, revealing himself to be a man, inspires a sublime shrug of a response ("Nobody's perfect!") that in just two words presaged a revolutionary new era of sexual tolerance; Michael Corleone closing the door—on his wife, on the audience, on his heart—in the final shot of *The Godfather*; and Jake La Motta, now a shadow-boxer of a man, punching the air opposite a nightclub mirror at the end of *Raging Bull* (above), his ghostly pantomime culminating in a shocking cut to black—a moment so indelible it single-handedly replaced the fade-out with the dramatic slash-cut.

SEND QUESTIONS TO ASKTHECRITIC@EW.COM, OR POST THEM ONLINE AT EW.COM/ASKTHECRITIC

The Spy Who Shagged Me: Leung and Tang

'Lust' in Translation

Ang Lee follows up *Brokeback Mountain* with an erotic thriller that steams up the screen but ultimately fails to seduce. **BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN**

Lust, Caution
Joan Chen, Tang Wei, Tony Leung
NC-17, 158 mins. (Focus)

In Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution*, a painfully high-toned erotic drama set in Japanese-occupied Shanghai during World War II, Tony Leung, as a poshly repressed Chinese government minister, and Tang Wei, as a willowy student resistance fighter who seduces him as part of an assassination plot, spend a fair amount of time with their clothes off. (At least, they do once you've sat through an eternity of muffled espionage noodling.) It's fair to say that most of what they do in their nakedness is easy on the eyes. The first time the two go at it, Leung, a veteran Hong Kong matinee idol who can look about as severe as Dracula, pulls off his belt and administers a beating to get her in the mood. Tang, a flashing-eyed newcomer wearing complicated hair and a conspiratorial bud of a smile, responds with gasps of pleasure. There are ripples of coercion and torment throughout their lovemaking—an ecstasy just this side of agony. Torsos glisten, limbs intertwine as if they belonged to double-jointed acrobats, and at one point there's a shot of intercourse that, unless Lee is using some effects that George Lucas never thought of concocting, makes it look a *lot* like the two actors are truly doing it.

The real kink, however, is in the situation. Tang's Wong Chia Chi is a student spy, part of a group of young radicals who want to bring down Leung's high-level collaborator, but she is also turned on by his power, his domineering fascist-aristocratic entitlement—everything she claims to despise about him politically. She loves him, in part, because she hates him. As for Leung's Mr. Yee, he has never tapped a desire this dark. For years, directors have dreamed of making a serious erotic drama with lyrically raunchy, even hardcore sex scenes. In films like *9 Songs* and the nifty *Shortbus*, the dream has recently come true—and audiences have yawned. *Lust, Caution* is the latest NC-17 hothouse, and as long as the two actors are writhing, locked in a grip of sadomasochistic romance, the movie has an avid sensual glow.

The rest of the time (and that's a lot of time—it's 2 hours and 38 minutes long), *Lust, Caution* is like a '40s Hollywood thriller made sedate and gorgeous and aesthetic and remote. Ang Lee, as he proved in *Brokeback Mountain*, can be a master at teasing out the emotion roiling under the surface of things, but *Lust, Caution* has more surface than emotion. Based on the Eileen Chang short story, the movie would have been better staged as fast, tawdry, voluptuous pulp, which is really all it is.

Lee makes the assassination plot maddeningly repetitious. There's nothing too interesting about this student group—its leader, played by Asian pop star Wang Leehom, is a humorless fanatic—and the fact that Wong's sympathies get tangled as they do is a complication Lee takes far too long to get to. At a restaurant, or a tailor's shop, Leung and Tang work to make their tango of repression vivid, but the scenes are so static and freighted it's as if Lee were fetishizing their reserve. *Lust, Caution* wants us to feel the erotic ping of buttoned-up people ripping open those buttons, but too often it's the film's drama that's under wraps. **C+**

LUST, CAUTION: CHAN KAM CHUEN. RAGING BULL: UNITED ARTISTS/KOBAL COLLECTION

Heavy Traffic

A harrowing drama sheds light on the reality of the sex trade. The plot, unfortunately, is Hollywood fantasy.

BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN

Trade
Kevin Kline, Paulina Gaitan,
R, 119 mins.
(Roadside Attractions)

A 13-year-old girl (Paulina Gaitan) is grabbed off the streets of Mexico City; a young Polish mother (Alicja Bachleda) is lured out of her country by a bogus nanny agency set up by the Russian Mob. Both are drugged, one is raped, and they are then dragged on a back-roads journey up to the United States, their identities snuffed, their paths all but impossible to trace. The evil captured by the journalistic thriller *Trade* begins with a clear-eyed account of the terrors of sex trafficking. It ends disturbingly close to home: in New Jersey, where that girl is placed in a cozy-looking house on a tree-lined block, as her virginity is auctioned off via the Internet to the highest bidder.

It's one thing to "accept" prostitution as an ugly but routine fact of human society. It's quite another to confront that there are now brothels, nestled all over middle-class America, in which young women, often underage, are imported as slaves. *Trade*, based on a *New York Times Magazine* story, chronicles that evil with unblinking detail. To watch the movie, however, you have to swallow a more necessary evil, which is the echt Hollywood story of Jorge (Cesar Ramos), the girl's teenage hothead brother, and Ray (Kevin Kline), the Texas lawman who teams up with him to help get her back. Kline gives a quiet, mournful, and effective performance, but too much of his rescue mission is too contrived to believe. As a movie, *Trade* is so-so, but as an exposé of how the new globalized industry of sex trafficking really works, it's a disquieting, eye-opening bulletin. **B–**

Kline cloaks a distraught Gaitan

TRADE: MARCO NAULL; RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION: VAN REDIN

THE CHART

BOX OFFICE

1 Resident Evil: Extinction

The third installment in the postapocalyptic video game series (starring Milla Jovovich) took up residence at the top of the box office with $23.7 million, a new record for the franchise.

THE TOP 20

		WEEKEND GROSS*	NUMBER OF SITES †	WEEKEND PER SITE AVERAGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE	WEEKS IN RELEASE	GROSS TO DATE
1	RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION	$23.7	2,828	$8,373	–	1	$23.7
2	GOOD LUCK CHUCK *Former next-big-things Dane Cook and Jessica Alba drew decent date-night crowds, but this rom-com's cute-or-crass identity crisis kept it from connecting with a larger audience. Either that, or 'Chuck' was just out of luck.*	$13.7	2,612	$5,227	–	1	$13.7
3	THE BRAVE ONE	$7.3	2,755	$2,655	–46	2	$25.0
4	3:10 TO YUMA	$6.2	2,902	$2,122	–31	3	$37.7
5	EASTERN PROMISES *The gruesome violence and tangled morals in this thriller—which reteams 'A History of Violence' director David Cronenberg and star Viggo Mortensen—delighted some moviegoers and disgusted others, resulting in per-screen numbers that don't look particularly promising.*	$5.6	1,404	$4,018	+931	2	$6.4
6	SYDNEY WHITE *The only non-R-rated newcomer in wide release, teen queen Amanda Bynes' 'Snow White' update had a dwarf-size debut, grossing less than half as much as the actress' last star vehicle, 'She's the Man' (2006).*	$5.2	2,104	$2,470	–	1	$5.2
7	MR. WOODCOCK	$4.9	2,237	$2,201	–44	2	$15.7
8	SUPERBAD	$3.1	2,305	$1,349	–39	6	$116.2
9	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM	$2.9	2,009	$1,430	–30	8	$220.2
10	DRAGON WARS	$2.6	2,274	$1,142	–48	2	$8.7
11	RUSH HOUR 3	$2.2	1,620	$1,360	–33	7	$136.1
12	HALLOWEEN	$2.2	2,338	$936	–55	4	$54.6
13	ACROSS THE UNIVERSE	$2.0	276	$7,068	+192	2	$2.9
14	MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY	$1.8	1,702	$1,045	–35	5	$30.8
15	BALLS OF FURY	$1.7	1,832	$930	–49	5	$31.3
16	TRANSFORMERS	$1.4	385	$3,731	+203	12	$313.6
17	IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH	$1.3	317	$3,996	+849	2	$1.4
18	SHOOT 'EM UP	$0.8	1,208	$649	–70	3	$12.1
19	THE NANNY DIARIES	$0.8	1,325	$591	–63	5	$25.2
20	HAIRSPRAY	$0.7	758	$940	–42	10	$117.4

SOURCE: NIELSEN EDI. WEEKEND OF SEPT. 21–SEPT. 23 *WEEKEND-GROSS AND GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS †INCLUDES SOME MULTISCREEN THEATERS AND PRINTS SHIPPED AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SCREENS

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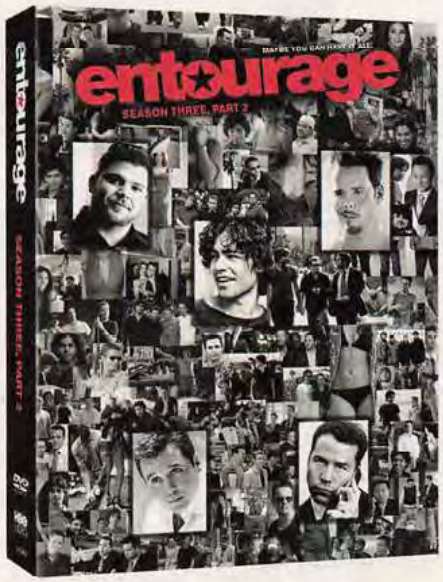

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Woman of *Misery*: Bates

Crazy Love

Kathy Bates' turn as a psychopathic caretaker gives *Misery* its chills and thrills.

BY NICHOLAS FONSECA

Misery
Collector's Edition
Kathy Bates, James Caan
R, 107 mins., 1990

Novelist Stephen King has perfected a signature blend of lurid phantasmagoria and gallows humor, and when filmmakers try to re-create it, they don't always succeed. For every cinematic classic like *Carrie* or *The Shawshank Redemption*, there's a clunker like *Thinner* or *Needful Things*. Director Rob Reiner has adapted King's work twice; thanks to a similar popcorn-auteur sensibility, he made it look effortless. Reiner recognized the autobiographical undercurrent of ennui that King slyly inserted into *Misery*, the story of Paul Sheldon (Caan), a mass-appeal author who feels trapped by his success. The tense, gripping thriller follows Sheldon as he recovers from a near-fatal car accident in the remote mountain home of Annie Wilkes (Bates), a jolly fangirl whose crazy-cat-lady wardrobe and memorable colloquialisms ("He didn't get out of the cockadoodie car!") belie a psychopath who'll hold Paul captive, hobble his feet, and try to force him into a suicide pact.

Bates was virtually unknown before she played Wilkes; now, it's impossible to see her in anything and not be reminded of this ferocious, Oscar-winning star turn—that's how perfectly she embodies the role. In his commentary—something of a cheat, since it was actually recorded for a 2003 international DVD release—Reiner says that Bates was always the "first and only choice" to play Annie, thanks to screenwriter William Goldman's suggestion. Caan was another story. A who's who of leading men (Redford, Hoffman, Beatty, Hackman, Dreyfuss...) turned down the role before he signed on. A physical actor by nature, Caan spent much of the shoot bedridden, and his frustration is palpable in what remains one of his finest performances. A trio of vets—Lauren Bacall, Frances Sternhagen, and the late, great Richard Farnsworth—draw welcome yuks in their brief scenes, but Bates and Caan simply dominate.

Misery builds economically to a climactic fight in which every scratch, ding, and wallop feels completely earned. The only misfire is an unnecessarily pedestrian coda, and in his commentary track (which is annoyingly separate from Reiner's), Goldman admits that "we're scrambling here." None of the other extras amount to much—there's a slew of junky bits, like the exploitative how-to segment "Advice for the Stalked" ("If that stalker calls, *you hang up*!") and "Diagnosing Annie Wilkes." Come now, do we really need a psychologist to explain that Annie is bipolar? Doesn't Bates convey that well enough?

Back to that hobbling scene: Reiner says many fans tell him that they consider it the most gruesome movie moment of all time. That's a stretch, but...yeesh. Seventeen years later, it still brings me pain. The movie itself? Nothing but pleasure. **B+**

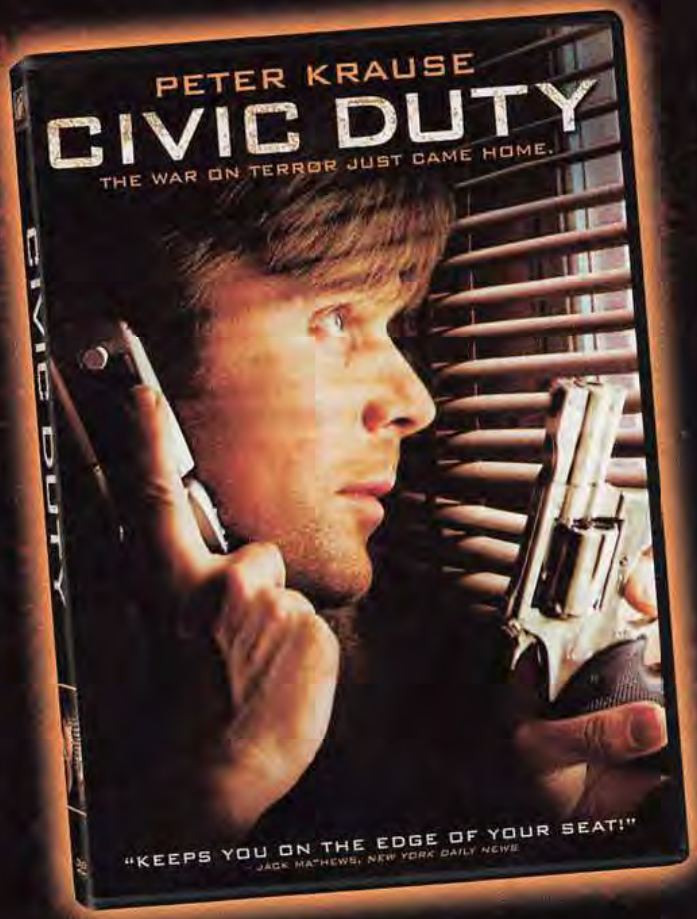
Backstory

+ *Misery*'s original music was composed by Marc Shaiman, a Tony winner, Emmy winner, and five-time Oscar nominee, whose work includes the tunes to *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* and the recent hit big-screen version of his Broadway show *Hairspray*.

MISERY: COLUMBIA/EVERETT COLLECTION

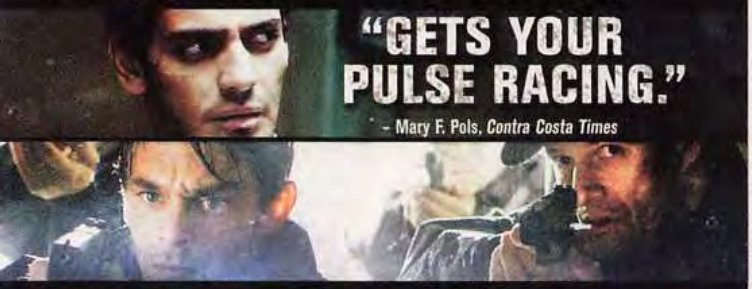
OWN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

That Gives New Meaning To "Neighborhood Watch."



"TWO THUMBS UP!"®
- Ebert & Roeper At The Movies

"LIKE HITCHCOCK... A TENSE THRILLER AND A CONVINCING PORTRAIT OF OUR PARANOID TIMES."
- Mark Holcomb, Time Out New York



"GETS YOUR PULSE RACING."
- Mary F. Pols, Contra Costa Times

ON DVD OCTOBER 2

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R FOR LANGUAGE AND SOME THREATENING SITUATIONS.

Bringing Up Baby

Judd Apatow's comedy delivers labor-induced laughs and a dose of overdue DVD extras.

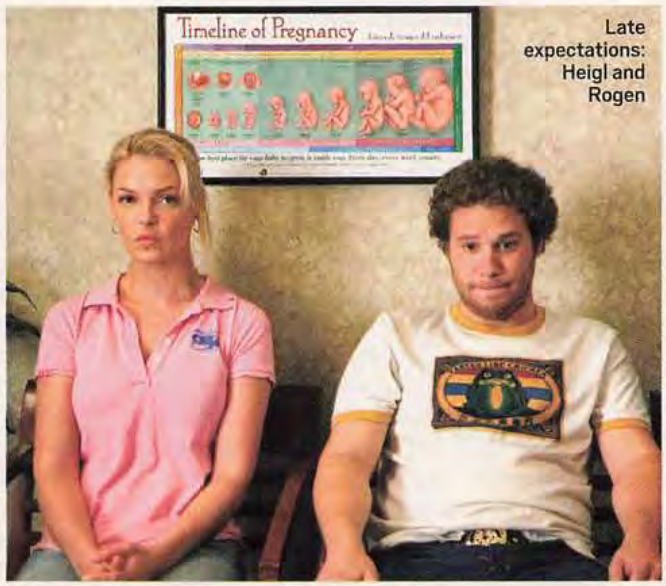
BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

Knocked Up
2-Disc Collector's Edition
Katherine Heigl, Seth Rogen
Unrated, 133 mins., 2007

Even after sitting through an extended version of *Knocked Up* and its more than three hours of extras, I'm still not sure what surprises me more: that a wake-and-bake Fred Flintstone clone like Seth Rogen could wind up with Katherine Heigl, or that he's even able to produce motile sperm after all the weed he and his dazed and confused pals smoke in the film. Or maybe it's this: that beneath all of the delightfully lewd riffs on masturbation, drugs, and female genitalia, writer-director-producer Judd Apatow's comedies end up championing such wholesome values as abstinence (*The 40 Year-Old Virgin*), friendship (*Superbad*), and responsibility (*Knocked Up*). He may be the sneakiest and snarkiest moralist in Hollywood.

For anyone who doesn't already know, *Knocked Up* stars Rogen as Ben Stone, a pot-smoking Peter Pan who's forced to grow up after a drunken one-night stand with a gorgeous go-getter (*Grey's Anatomy* Emmy winner Heigl) leads to a morning-after of hangovers and home pregnancy tests. After becoming the sleeper sensation of the summer, the film now hits the home market awash in bonus features ranging from hilarious (Jonah Hill's deleted discourse on the lack of graphic gay sex in *Brokeback Mountain*) to surreal (Rogen's shirtless alternate takes of scenes) to superfluous (Apatow's on-set video diaries).

Strangely, it's the most anticipated extra that feels like the biggest letdown—the commentary track from Apatow, Rogen, and costar Bill Hader (*SNL*), who periodically interrupts the self-congratulatory guffawing with random impressions of Al Pacino and Vincent Price. **B+**



Late expectations: Heigl and Rogen

SUZANNE HANOVER

The Intruder

William Shatner, Charles Beaumont
PG-13, 83 mins., 1962

Until its too-tidy ending, this uncharacteristically serious drama from cult director Roger Corman is chillingly effective. A trim, unmannered Shatner plays against his clean-cut handsomeness as an extremist stoking racism in a Southern town on the cusp of integration. Taut filmmaking and a supporting cast of nonprofessionals (who, Corman says, were given a "watered-down" script) make the virulence uncomfortably vivid. **EXTRAS** In a short doc, Corman reveals that *The Intruder*—his one nonexploitation flick—took 40 years to break even. **B** —*Tim Purtell*

Chalk

Troy Schremmer, Chris Mass
PG-13, 85 mins., 2007

Penned by two ex-instructors, this mockumentary examines what transpires in a teachers' lounge. The humor is dry when drawing on stereotypes—like a coach's claim that "not all PE teachers are gay"—but the film also purveys true pedagogical gems: Painfully aware of their role-model status, the educators must justify their own shortcomings when confronted with failure, or worse, that of their students. **EXTRAS** Commentary from the creative team and "My Most Inspirational Teacher" essays from the cast and crew earn extra credit. **A–** —*Youyoung Lee*

Lucky You

Eric Bana, Robert Duvall, Drew Barrymore
PG-13, 123 mins., 2007

In Texas Hold 'Em, *flop* refers to the moment the dealer turns over three cards. Alas, this Vegas romance suggests another meaning of the word. Bana plays Huck, a poker ace who falls for Barrymore's lounge singer. Director Curtis Hanson (*L.A. Confidential*) squeezes some suspense out of the card games—particularly those with Duvall as Huck's estranged dad—but his chemistry-starved stars are dealt a losing hand. **EXTRAS** Mini-docs and deleted scenes reinforce the sage advice of Kenny Rogers: Know when to walk away, know when to run. **C–** —*Josh Rottenberg*

Animation Alley

SEASON OF THE 'WITCH'

Unleash your inner superhero with these cutting-edge cartoons

Well established as a hit comic book and a lousy live-action 2001–02 TV show, **WITCHBLADE** can't be considered an original concept. Yet this volume 1 DVD (Unrated, 100 mins., 2006), collecting the first batch of half-hour anime cartoons directed by Yoshimitsu Ohashi, intrigues with its mixture of humor, violence, and sex.

The Witchblade is, to summarize brutally, an ancient amulet that attaches itself primarily to women, giving them superpowers. Masane, a single mother to an adorable little girl, Rihoko, finds herself the latest Witchblade possessor, stalked by both the government and a mysterious evil corporation. (Everybody wants control of the 'blade.) The series finds sweet, funny affection between mother and daughter, and an anguished terror when they are separated.

In keeping with anime convention, Masane is unusually busty, and when her amulet transforms her into a mighty hero, exposed parts of her body push this cartoon into PG-13 territory. Sexualizing Mom while maintaining kid-friendly plotlines is a typical anime ploy to attract older viewers; *Witchblade* is artful enough to appeal to both audiences without offending either. **B+** —*Ken Tucker*

THE CHART

DVD SALES

1 GREY'S ANATOMY

The third season of ABC's doctor drama spearheads a healthy slew of similar DVDs: Eleven of the 20 top sellers are TV shows.

TOP 20		LAST WEEK	BOX OFFICE GROSS TO DATE*	WEEKS IN RELEASE	EW GRADE
1	**GREY'S ANATOMY: SEASON 3** *"Time After Time." "Don't Stand So Close to Me." "Wishin' and Hopin'." If you thought the episode titles sounded familiar, it's because every show takes its name from a pop song.*	–	–	1	B
2	**WILD HOGS**	4	$168.3	5	C+
3	**DELTA FARCE**	1	$8.1	2	D–†
4	**CHARMED: THE FINAL SEASON**	–	–	1	B
5	**BLADES OF GLORY**	2	$118.2	3	B
6	**HEROES: SEASON 1**	6	–	3	A–
7	**300**	8	$210.6	7	B+
8	**DISNEY PRINCESS...**	7	–	2	–
9	**GEORGIA RULE**	5	$18.9	2	D
10	**THE OFFICE: SEASON 3**	3	–	2	A–
11	**DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE**	–	$0.5	1	–
12	**BONES: SEASON 2**	–	–	1	–
13	**TWO AND A HALF MEN: S1** *Whether he's at the kitchen table or coffee shop, child star Angus T. Jones only sits in a specifically designated chair, with Charlie Sheen to his left and Jon Cryer to his right. Yeah, Jones can't explain it either.*	–	–	1	–
14	**PRISON BREAK: SEASON 2**	9	–	2	A–
15	**NIP/TUCK: SEASON 4** *Cheeks made from bone grafted from the skull? Creator/director/exec producer Ryan Murphy is not as perversely imaginative as you may think: Every surgery on the show is based on actual reconstructive procedures that have happened, or are being innovated now.*	10	–	2	A–
16	**DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES: S3**	11	–	2	–
17	**PERFECT STRANGER**	12	$24.0	4	D+
18	**SUPERNATURAL: SEASON 2**	–	–	1	–
19	**RESIDENT EVIL...**	–	$89.8	2	–
20	**SOUTH PARK: SEASON 10**	15	–	4	–

SOURCES: *RENTRAK* FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPT. 15, 2007; NIELSEN EDI *IN MILLIONS
† ORIGINAL THEATRICAL GRADE

THE INTRUDER: EVERETT COLLECTION; *LUCKY YOU*: MERIE W. WALLACE; *GREY'S ANATOMY*: SCOTT GARFIELD

Ms. Roboto

NBC's dark update of *Bionic Woman* attempts to harness some serious girl power.

BY GILLIAN FLYNN

I am *Woman*: Ryan

Bionic Woman
Wednesdays, 9 p.m.
NBC

At one point in *Bionic Woman*—NBC's sleeker, faster, cooler version of the 1970s series—a little girl looks out the window of a car to see the 2007-model Jaime Sommers (*East Enders*' Michelle Ryan) zipping through the woods like a cheetah. The child alerts her disbelieving mother, and then smiles: "I just thought it was cool a girl could do that."

Too much? Yes, too much! And yet, it's one of those moments you just have to shrug at and enjoy. Girls can do lots of things in this energetic, dark drama: They can leap buildings, cartwheel around rooftops, and pounce across rooms in flimsy hospital gowns. As rethought for the 21st century, Jaime is no mere girlfriend of Steve Austin. She's the girlfriend of a cute scientist (Will Anthros)! When a car smashup threatens Jaime's life, he copters her off to his underground lair, er, research facility, where the majority of her body parts—both legs, an arm, an ear, an eye—are replaced by futuristic military bionics. The compromise? She's now government property, and must participate in secret operations or be killed. When she's informed of this, her beau is apologetic, but not that apologetic: "You're hardwired for highly specialized warfare, yes," he admits in a hilarious *Oh, did I forget to mention that?* moment.

But the writers need to tweak the irony: *Bionic Woman* is a flowery-feminist show whose go-girl premise depends on some dude asserting control over a young woman's body without her permission. Will this be a clever commentary on current sexual dynamics? Or just unimaginative storytelling? (The whole aggro-male vibe is partly due to poor casting: Anthros appears a good decade older than baby-faced Ryan, giving all their interactions a skeezy overlay.) Whether *Bionic Woman* plays with its contradictions and proves to be an insightful, allegorical series like exec producer David Eick's other show, *Battlestar Galactica*, remains to be seen. It could end up being simple, popcorny fun (no small feat), in which case the only other worry is Ryan. The Brit actress has the same brunet intensity as *Alias*' Jennifer Garner, but lacks the innate confidence. This absence is glaring anytime she's acting opposite slick, pissy Katee Sackhoff (*Battlestar*), who shows up as the very first bionic woman, gone bad, determined to get badder. "I'm cutting away all the parts of me that are weak," she tells Jaime, creepily, before trying to kill her. The problem is, if you're a fan of Sackhoff's throaty, chin-jutty delivery, she absolutely overpowers the callow Ryan, and if you're not a fan of Sackhoff...she *still* overpowers Ryan. It's not going to get easier for the actress when the gravitas-enriched Isaiah Washington starts his guest arc in October. In short, this Bionic Girl had better hurry up and become a real Woman. **B**

Backstory

+ In *Bionic*'s pilot Jaime Sommers had a deaf sister, played by Mae Whitman (*State of Grace*). But before the show ever aired the part was reworked, and *American Juniors*' Lucy Hale (above) now plays a "budding hacker" with no hearing impairment.

BIONIC WOMAN: ALAN ZENUK; HALE: MITCHELL HASSETH

'Life' Is Good

A charming, calming Damian Lewis brings Zen to the art of cop shows

BY KEN TUCKER

Lewis and Shahi, pondering *Life*

Life
Wednesdays, 10 p.m.
NBC

The British actor Damian Lewis, beloved by some of us for his smart, sensitive role in HBO's *Band of Brothers*, does a perfect American accent in *Life*, a very good new show that needs a more vivid title and more of NBC's promotional oomph.

Lewis plays Charlie Crews, an L.A. cop who spent 12 years in jail for a murder he didn't commit. Now exonerated and with a handsome settlement, Charlie opts to return to his beat, even though he could retire on his new wealth. The premise of *Life* is that prison changed Charlie profoundly; he maintained his sanity by adopting a state of Zen calm and philosophical quizzicality. These new skills now help him solve crimes.

If that premise seems more appropriate to a USA Network, "Characters Welcome" series like *Psych* or *Burn Notice*, well, that may be true: Contemplative *Life* doesn't fit with NBC's hypier new shows like *Journeyman* or *Bionic Woman*. Charlie—partnered with Dani Reese (*The L Word*'s Sarah Shahi), an imagination-free detective who has substance-abuse demons—chews fresh fruit compulsively and interrogates in a soothing murmur. He tells suspects, "I hate cops too"—and many of his fellow officers, who don't buy his DNA-evidence pardon, hate him, too.

I love Lewis' character; ditto Adam Arkin as his buddy/financial advisor and Robin Weigert—*Deadwood*'s Calamity Jane—who enlivens a crusty-police-captain role that's written merely as an impersonation of Dann Florek in *Law & Order: SVU*. *Life* is intelligent fun. **B+**

"Contemplative *Life* doesn't fit with NBC's hypier new shows like *Journeyman* or *Bionic Woman*."

SLOB STORY

If Tyler Labine's scene-stealing character in The CW's 'Reaper' seems familiar, it's probably because Labine has played a similarly buffoonish second banana in three other sci-fi-tinged series. Here's a breakdown. —Tanner Stransky

REAPER *The CW*
Name Bert "Sock" Wysocki **The Role** The reaper's loose-cannon pal and accomplice. **Memorable Moment** In the pilot, Sock slams a hyperactive dog with a car door...just for fun. **His Take** "[That scene] has no merit except it gives you a super-big glimpse into the character. He's just impulsive. I'm definitely not advocating cruelty to animals!"

INVASION *ABC*
Name Dave Groves **The Role** A beer-swilling slob with a heart of gold. **Memorable Moment** Labine once passed gas loudly while cameras rolled. Surprisingly, the stinky scene made it on air. **His Take** "From then on, no one talked about my cool character arc or my nuanced performance. It's like, 'You're the guy who let it rip!'"

DEAD LAST *The WB*
Name Scotty Sallback **The Role** A flaky drummer who, with the aid of his bandmates, helps souls escape purgatory. (Honest, we're not making this stuff up.) **Memorable Moment** Attempting to perform an emergency appendectomy on his band's manager. **His Take** "Scotty was a wild card. I mean, who gave him a scalpel? But he brought levity."

THAT WAS THEN *ABC*
Name Donnie Pinkus **The Role** A thirtysomething boob whose friend time-travels back to high school. **Memorable Moment** Donnie tries to time-travel too, by dunking his Walkman in a hot tub. **His Take** "There wasn't much thought required [for the role]. In that scene, my dopey character just ended up getting electrocuted. He was completely hapless."

LIFE: JUSTIN LUBIN; LABINE (LEFT TO RIGHT): ANDREW ECCLES; ERIC OGDEN; EVERETT COLLECTION

EW.COM POLL

Which television star are you happiest to see return to a regular series?

33% *Christina Applegate in ABC's 'Samantha Who?'*

29% *Peter Krause in ABC's 'Dirty Sexy Money'*

21% *Jimmy Smits in CBS' 'Cane'*

9% *Joe Mantegna in CBS' 'Criminal Minds'*

7% *Johnny Galecki in CBS' 'The Big Bang Theory'*

READER RESPONSE

"Growing up watching Applegate be this trashy dumb blonde, I am delighted to see her do an intelligent role."

"Peter Krause!!! Hell, yeah!!! And with *Dexter* starting its new season on Showtime, we just need the rest of the *Six Feet Under* cast on something."

"Can't they round up the *West Wing* cast one more time?"

NEXT WEEK: Jennie Garth? Wayne Newton? Who are you rooting for on *Dancing With the Stars*? To vote, go to *ew.com/tvpoll*.

Hands across *America*: Kalyan and Byrd

Coming to 'America'

The CW's endearing new comedy about a Wisconsin teen and a Muslim exchange student shows some school spirit. **BY GILLIAN FLYNN**

Aliens in America
Mondays, 8:30 p.m.
The CW

The CW's new comedy *Aliens in America* is fated to be summed up as "the show about the dorky Wisconsin kid whose mom tries to import a cool Euro friend for him—but their exchange student turns out to be a Muslim from Pakistan!" That's why I resisted watching *Aliens*: It seemed likely to be nose-wrinklingly broad or gag-inducingly sweet. As it turns out, *Aliens* is, in fact, quite broad—a fair amount of the comedy comes from foreign-born Raja (Adhir Kalyan) and his stilted English. But it's not offensively so. It's more like this: "I accept your challenge," Raja says when his new host-friend Justin (*Clubhouse*'s Dan Byrd) declares a thumb war. So, small-broad. But every character endures his share of ribbing here. Just as often the jokes come from the extreme self-consciousness with which Justin is afflicted—on his first day of classes, the new junior thinks he may no longer be the high school pariah, only to find the seniors listed him as one of the "10 Most Bangable Girls" (a few notches below his sister).

And now for the cute part: Justin starts to bloom under Raja's patient, unjudgmental influence. But again, not eck-cute. Justin—who narrates the comedy, *Wonder Years*-style—talks about how he finds himself opening up to Raja, confessing "stuff I wouldn't even tell the guys from chorus." Admit it: cute. It helps when you see Kalyan and Byrd together. They are two likable, unaffected actors (or at least as unaffected as *Aliens*' heightened reality allows them to be; this show would be a mess in lesser hands). Along with the fellows of *Chuck* and *Reaper*, they are guys who just seem kinda...nice. It's a pleasure.

Aliens is wisely paired with *Everybody Hates Chris* on The CW's Monday night, and the two shows share both an aesthetic (slightly staged, smartly shabby) and a central family that's crazy but loving. Justin's mom (Amy Pietz, funnier here than she ever was on *Caroline in the City*) is blindly doting, helping Justin brush his hair like Ashton Kutcher's and debating whether she should take him to Milwaukee for modeling classes. His father (*Gilmore Girls*' Scott Patterson) is an extreme tightwad who raises alpacas in the suburban backyard for extra cash. His aforementioned younger sister (Lindsey Shaw) grew breasts over the summer, and got popular. The high school scenes manage to balance their lunacy (bullying brothers who ask whether Justin is gay because he's not "tapping" his hot sister; a guidance counselor who is literally part used-car salesman) with a basic understanding of teenage politics. There's a great moment when the sister is trying to avoid uncool Justin, who's trying to avoid even uncooler Raja, who's trailed by his new friend, Small Paul, the school's 11-year-old genius outcast. You gotta love an underdog, and *Aliens* has them to spare. **B+**

CHRISTINA APPLEGATE: BOB D'AMICO; WAYNE NEWTON: ADAM LARKEY/ALIENS IN AMERICA: MAE PATTON

'KID' POWER?

Is 'Kid Nation' (Wednesdays, 8 p.m., on CBS) innocent, cherubic fun, or the equivalent of a reality TV sweatshop?

LOVE IT

Now that we've all seen the sweet, energetic *Kid Nation* premiere, let's stop being offended (faux-fended?) by the "child abuse." We've got 40 kids, *just being themselves*. Is this parental exploitation? Only if you apply that same standard to plays, pageants, and overenthusiastic T-ball leagues. The network, directors, and weird host Jonathan Karsh may all have ulterior motives, but the kids don't. They just want to hunt jackrabbits and skip showering and eat candy and yell really loud all day and, for once, have a say in what happens to them. Tell me, cynics: What's not to love about that? —*Whitney Pastorek*

LOATHE IT

Who is this ultracontrived child-empowerment propaganda meant for, other than kids looking for backup in their argument that they're old enough to decide to eat ice cream for breakfast? Kids *can't* do anything they put their minds to, nor should they be made to. Plus, a child-size sadism hangs over the kids-are-people-too-scape: Cameramen gleefully zoom in on a homesick, weeping 8-year-old when they should be giving him a cookie, and Karsh tells the kids that at any time they can "give up and go home." He had to stick "give up" in there, didn't he? Well, I give up too. —*Josh Wolk*

SOUND BITES

"Last week I told a perfectly harmless PMS joke, and she threw a bottle at me. Whose point did she prove there?"
—MARSH (FRED WILLARD), COMPLAINING ABOUT KELLY (PATRICIA HEATON), ON *BACK TO YOU*

"Everybody's in the same boat. We're literally in the same boat."
—MILA, ASSESSING THE SEMIFINALISTS, WHO ARE ALL LIVING ON A CRUISE SHIP, ON *AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL*

"What we're entitled to is a trust fund... a house in the Hamptons...maybe a prescription drug problem. But happiness does not seem to be on the menu."
—CHUCK BASS (ED WESTWICK), EXPLAINING THE DOWNSIDE OF BEING A RICH KID, ON *GOSSIP GIRL*

"I just have an idea in my head of how I'd want my party where I announce my engagement, and it didn't include a keg or a Bob Marley poster."
—LAUREN, ON EX-BOYFRIEND JASON'S FRATTY ENGAGEMENT FIESTA, ON *THE HILLS*

"You're an over-singer. It's like you swallowed Mariah Carey."
—EDDIE (BRAD GARRETT), CRITICIZING HIS WIFE'S "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" TECHNIQUE, ON *'TIL DEATH*

THE CHART

THE RATINGS

1 SUNDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

The Dallas Cowboys wrangled a big win with a 34–10 rout of the Chicago Bears.

THE TOP 20

		VIEWERS*	LAST WEEK
1	**SUNDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL** NBC, Sunday, 8:25 p.m.	19.0	1
2	**SURVIVOR: CHINA** CBS, Thursday, 8 p.m. *CBS' long-running hit was the top premiere of the week but is slumping from past outings: This opener drew a million fewer viewers than last February's Fiji kickoff. Plus, with heavy-hitting time-slot competitors 'Ugly Betty' and 'My Name Is Earl' now returning, this may end up being the season high for Jeff Probst and Co.*	15.4	—
3	**CSI (R)** CBS, Thursday, 9 p.m.	14.1	8
4	**COLD CASE** CBS, Sunday, 9 p.m.	12.7	18
5	**DEAL OR NO DEAL** NBC, Monday, 8 p.m.	11.7	—
6	**SHARK** CBS, Sunday, 10 p.m.	11.4	23
	60 MINUTES CBS, Sunday, 7 p.m.	11.4	3
8	**WITHOUT A TRACE (R)** CBS, Thursday, 10 p.m.	11.3	5
9	**TWO AND A HALF MEN (R)** CBS, Monday, 9 p.m.	10.8	4
	FAMILY GUY Fox, Sunday, 9 p.m.	10.8	—
11	**DEAL OR NO DEAL** NBC, Wednesday, 8 p.m.	9.9	—
12	**CSI: MIAMI (R)** CBS, Monday, 10 p.m.	9.7	9
13	**THE SIMPSONS** Fox, Sunday, 8 p.m.	9.6	—
14	**BACK TO YOU** Fox, Wednesday, 8 p.m. *Kelsey Grammer and Patricia Heaton's much-anticipated new comedy pulled decent numbers and beat time-slot competitors 'Kid Nation' (No. 15) and 'America's Next Top Model' (No. 54).*	9.5	—
15	**KID NATION** CBS, Wednesday, 8 p.m.	9.4	—
16	**CSI: NY (R)** CBS, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	9.2	6
17	**DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES (R)** ABC, Sunday, 9 p.m.	9.0	—
18	**K-VILLE** Fox, Monday, 9:01 p.m.	8.9	—
19	**BIG BROTHER 8** CBS, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	8.7	11
20	**CRIMINAL MINDS (R)** CBS, Wednesday, 9:06 p.m.	8.4	10

OFF THE CHART *There's no 'Break' in the ratings for Fox's onetime buzzworthy show: Down 1.9 million from last season's premiere, 'Prison Break' (No. 31) drew just 7.5 million viewers to its first episode.*

* IN MILLIONS WEEK OF SEPT. 17–23, 2007 SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH

KID NATION: MONTY BRINTON; FRED WILLARD: SAM JONES; SUNDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL: JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY IMAGES

What if everything you loved vanished in broad daylight?
A Five-Week Miniseries from HBO Films
FIVE DAYS
Each day will bring us closer to the truth.
HBO FILMS PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BBC "FIVE DAYS" HUGH BONNEVILLE JANET McTEER DAVID OYELOWO AND EDWARD WOODWARD WRITTEN BY GWYNETH HUGHES PRODUCED BY PAUL RUTMAN "DAY ONE", "DAY THREE" AND "DAY TWENTY-EIGHT" DIRECTED BY OTTO BATHURST "DAY THIRTY-THREE" AND "DAY SEVENTY-NINE" DIRECTED BY SIMON CURTIS
Every Tuesday in October
Starts October 2 at 8pm
HBO
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BY ALYNDA WHEAT

WHAT to WATCH

A day-to-day guide to notable programs*

Sous me: Front-runner Hung isn't to everyone's taste, but he's got skills

SEASON FINALE

WEDNESDAY 10.03

10–11:15PM

Top Chef Bravo, TV-14

PREVIEW You know where the smart money is. Hung's been the clear favorite to take home *Chef's* $100K purse ever since gentleman and food scholar Tre took a header in the restaurant-wars challenge. Baldly ambitious, seriously cutthroat (and with the knife skills to back it up), the 29-year-old executive sous-chef is far from the socialite of the crew—mohawked Dale and rising star Casey share that honor. But we like Hung's technical precision, consistency, and surprising sense of humor. Anyone who builds a Smurf village out of Froot Loops knows how to laugh at himself.

Monday 10.01

8–8:30PM
How I Met Your Mother
CBS, TV-PG-DL
Pretending to be tourists to pick up chicks will get you nowhere, *Mother* boys. The attraction of travelin' men is (1) they can't understand us, (2) they eventually leave. Actually, that kinda sounds like you.

Series Debut
8–9PM
Celebrity Exposé
MyNetworkTV
The latest in celeb-centric TV gets all up in LiLo's bidness. Chill. They'll check out Brit's bits next week.

Season Premiere
9–9:30PM
Girlfriends
The CW, TV-14-L
Aaron and Joan are happy, they have a house, it's so... perfect. If only something could come along to ruin it.

9–10PM
K-Ville
Fox, TV-14-LV
No surprise a dead ex-DA and Captain Embry both knew the same hooker. They just shouldn't have known her quite so *well*.

9–10PM
Heroes
NBC, TV-14-V
So Hiro's samurai warrior man-crush is a white guy? This is so *Shogun*!

9:30–10PM
Rules of Engagement
CBS, TV-PG-DL
Still waiting for Heather Locklear to play someone besides herself? Yeah, that bus ain't comin': Heather guests as a woman who, to everyone's shock, likes dating Russell (David Spade).

10–10:30PM
Weeds
HBO, TV-MA
Ham and eggs, stars and stripes, Andy and porn—some things just go together.

Series Debut
11:05–11:35PM
Dr. Steve-O
USA, TV-14-SLD
Jackass star Steve-O ventures out to "de-wussify wimps, nerds, and couch potatoes." How proud is Tony Shalhoub right now that he's on this network?

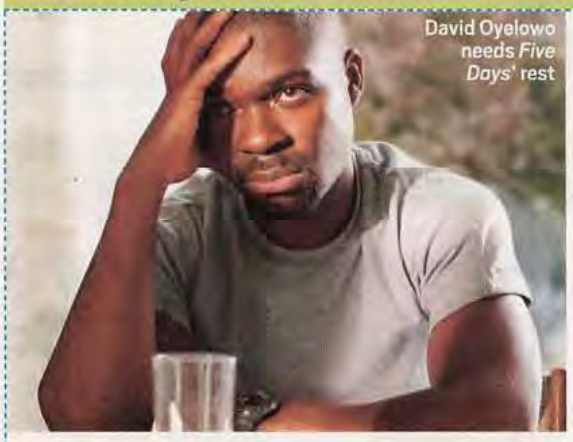
Rock

8–8:30PM
Everybody Hates Chris
The CW, TV-PG
After an interminable two-year wait, The CW's dream has finally come true: Chris Rock will guest in the series he helped to create! Tonight, Rock, who continues to narrate the consistently funny show, plays a guidance counselor who gives Chris some tough love over his poor performance on a proficiency exam. Chides Rock's sour Mr. Abbott, "The way I see it, you're about two bad decisions away from a life of crime!" No, the real crime is how many of you people are still ignoring this show. A– *—Lynette Rice*

TOP CHEF: BARBARA NITKE; EVERYBODY HATES CHRIS: SCOTT HUMBERT

*TIMES ARE EASTERN DAYLIGHT AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Tuesday 10.02


David Oyelowo needs *Five Days*' rest

8–9PM
Five Days HBO, TV-14
Busy and gripping, this five-part mystery starts its ticking clock with the disappearance of a British mum and her two children on the way to visit Great-granddad (*The Equalizer*'s Edward Woodward). The first episode sets up a boatload of interwoven characters: a husband under suspicion, an ambitious reporter, a Good Samaritan who gets overinvolved, and myriad shocked detectives, including *Songcatcher*'s Janet McTeer. The sheer number of plotlines can be overwhelming, but the images—flowers dropped on the side of the road, a dusty van sliding away—are relentlessly riveting. And the series only gets better from here. A– —*Gillian Flynn*

Season Premiere
8–8:30PM
The Singing Bee
NBC, TV-PG
Pop quiz: Is this the one hosted by the nonthreatening black guy or the guy from 'N Sync you never fantasized about? Latter.

8–9PM
Beauty and the Geek
The CW
Everything you needed to know you learned in high school: Calculus is useless, Transcendentalism is nice in theory, and *no good ever comes from Truth or Dare*.

Series Debut
8:30–9PM
Carpoolers
ABC, TV-PG-L
The guys on this show are named—get this—Gracen, Laird, Marmaduke, Aubrey, and Dougie. I know! What kinda name is *Dougie*?

9–10PM
House
Fox, TV-14-D
Know how when you break up with someone, you think you see them everywhere? Now try *three* someones.

Season Premiere, Part 2
9–10PM
The Unit
CBS, TV-14-DLSV
Conspiracies! Spies! Extraordinary rendi—oh, for the love of all that's holy, will you *stop* staring at Dennis Haysbert's newly buff bod? Sheesh.

Season Finale
9–10PM
Eureka
Sci Fi, TV-PG-LV
Allison, Carter, and Stark spend "A Night at Global Dynamics." I'm not saying it's kinky, but there is a Franken-virus involved.

SEASON PREMIERE

9–11PM
Queer Eye: The Final Season
Bravo
The Final Season?* Might as well call it *Queer Eye: We Swear to God You'll Never See Us After This. Promise. Oh, and Here's Guest Susan Lucci for Your Trouble.

10–11PM
Damages
FX, TV-MA
The longest case since *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* reaches Arthur's deposition.

Series Debut
11PM–MIDNIGHT
The Runaways
MSNBC
MSNBC wonders (wah-wah-wah-wah) wonders why (why, why, why, why, why) they ran away.

Wednesday 10.03

Series Debut
8–9PM
Pushing Daisies
ABC, TV-PG-LV
Extra! Lovelorn pie man splits EW staff. Gillian makes the call later.

Series Debut
8–9PM*
Wired Science
PBS
Wired magazine...on TV. Yay? **check local listings*

Season Premiere
10–10:30PM
South Park
Comedy Central, TV-MA
We have *no idea* what those kids will do. Neither does Comedy Central.

Series Debut
11:15–12:15PM
Better Half
Bravo
Spouses swap jobs, keep resentments.

Silverman
SEASON PREMIERE

10:30–11PM
The Sarah Silverman Program
Comedy Central, TV-14-D
Abortion is no joke. So naturally, Sarah makes plenty about the subject in this premiere. There are a few well-earned laughs (and I'm going to hell for just typing that), but ultimately, this episode is fatally flawed thanks to a stupid *Dungeons & Dragons*-themed subplot that's as unoriginal (and unfunny) as it sounds. C– —*Nicholas Fonseca*

Thursday 10.04

8–9PM
Survivor: China
CBS
Are we the only ones who watch this show? Note to all future *Survivor* chicks: You play in the clothes you came in. Don't. Wear. Skimpy. Dresses.

Season Premiere
9–10PM
Supernatural
The CW, TV-14-DLV
Only family would give you crap about the *way* you're dying: Sam's ticked that Dean just wants to party before shuffling off this mortal coil.

9–10:01PM
Grey's Anatomy
ABC, TV-14
With special guest stars Ben Vereen as Archie and Diahann Carroll as Mama Burke! Next week on *The Leslie Uggams Show*...

Baldwin tries to cancel Seinfeld
SEASON PREMIERE

8:30–9PM
30 Rock NBC, TV-PG-D
"This is going to be our year," says Jack (Alec Baldwin) to Liz (Tina Fey). Lucky for us, "our year" finds Liz sulking in an unneeded wedding dress and Jack developing a new reality hit, *MILF Island* ("25 superhot moms, 50 eighth graders, no rules"). The bonus: Jerry Seinfeld playing himself, peeved at NBC for splicing old footage of him into its current shows. (SeinfeldVision!) So he threatens to "buy NBC and turn it into the biggest Lane Bryant in midtown." As long as they play *30 Rock* in the dressing rooms, Jer, we're in. A– —*Henry Goldblatt*

FIVE DAYS: NICK BRIGGS; SUSAN LUCCI: SYLVAIN GABOURY/FILMMAGIC.COM; THE SARAH SILVERMAN PROGRAM: STEVE AGEE; 30 ROCK: CHRIS HASTON

Friday 10.05

SEASON FINALE
But whose hand is on the right?

8–9PM
Doctor Who
Sci Fi, TV-PG-V
If it's the end of the *Who* season, then Earth must be in peril. So it is, as the Master (John Simm), the second-to-last Time Lord (the Doctor's not the only one), decides that people make nice slaves. Martha (Freema Agyeman) finally gets her glory moment, as she hunts the Master. But even if she prevails, she and the good Doc (David Tennant) may not. B+

8–9PM
Ghost Whisperer
CBS, TV-PG-L
Remember when mean kids told you playing Bloody Mary would kill you? Liars. Only puts you in a coma.

8–10:30PM
Boomerang
Bravo, R
Sort of ironic that one of Eddie Murphy's best flicks is the one where he thinks picking Robin Givens over Halle Berry is a *good* idea.

SEASON PREMIERE

9–10PM
Friday Night Lights
NBC, TV-PG
Kyle Chandler and crew tackle love, work, and the occasional running back. Now on Fridays, with 50 percent more scheduling logic!

9–11PM
How I Married My High School Crush
Lifetime, TV-PG
Teen wishes herself and her crush into adulthood—and their wedding day. It's like *13 Going on 30*, but with consequences.

10–11PM
Las Vegas
NBC, TV-14-DL
Mike and Danny both want to be president of the Montecito. Let's see, Mike is a brilliant polymath whose wicked smarts solve myriad problems, and Danny is...cute.

10–11PM
Numb3rs
CBS, TV-PG-L
A woman murdered in a hot actor's house? That's ridiculous. Everyone knows it's actresses and pop tarts you gotta worry about.

Dreckula? O'Loughlin sinks his teeth into a campy role

9–10PM
Moonlight CBS, TV-PG-V
Why wouldn't you want to hire private investigator Mick St. John (Alex O'Loughlin)? He's a sexy, sensitive vampire who can literally smell the past (*Blade*-meets-*Mannix*, but more in touch with his feelings). Plus, since he gets his blood from a supplier at the morgue, you know he'll never turn on you when he feels peckish. And so professional! He's all about crushing evildoers, like tonight's lady-killer, who targets a friend of Beth (Sophia Myles), the TV journalist Mick rescued as a kid—and again as an adult (and again, and again, we bet). Sure, Mick's life is ridiculous, but you don't go lookin' for realism between *Ghost Whisperer* and *Numb3rs*. B–

Saturday 10.06

Season Premiere
10–10:30AM
Postman Pat
NBC, TV-Y
Kids got mail.

1:30–6PM*
The War
PBS, TV-14
That's right, PBS is carpet bombing us with Ken Burns' WWII doc. Get it? Carpet bombing?? Tough room. (R) **check local listings*

8–9PM
Battle of the Bands
Nickelodeon, TV-Y7
Naked Bros Band dresses up for their first movie.

9–11:30PM
Blood Diamond
HBO, R
Righting the wrong for those of you last year who decided you'd already reached your annual quota of Leo prestige pics.

9–10PM
Torchwood
BBC America, TV-14
Jack has nightmares from his past...which is our future. It's complicated.

10–11PM
John Edward Cross Country
WEtv, TV-PG
John does a reading for Patti Austin. I don't know if it's the pseudo-psychic vibe, but John and I are mind-melding *right now*: We both wish more of you knew who Patti Austin is.

SLUMMING ALERT!

11PM–MIDNIGHT
MADtv
Fox, TV-14-DLS
Susan Sarandon hosts. *Rocky Horror* Susan Sarandon, not Oscar-bait Susan Sarandon.

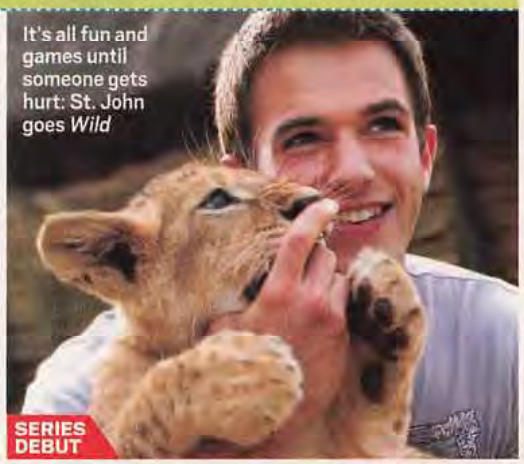
Sunday 10.07

8–10:30PM
Low Winter Sun
BBC America, TV-14
Brit-noir film asks, "Is there such a thing as a perfect crime?" Chris Tucker's career says, "Yes."

9–11PM
Pandemic: Bird Flu
Science
Riiight, we're all s'posed to be living in fear of chicken plague. Completely forgot.

9–11PM
Koppel on Discovery: Breaking Point
Discovery, TV-14-L
Ted says prisons are full. Next time, RSVP.

9:30–10PM
American Dad
Fox, TV-14-LV
Forest Whitaker guests. *Ridgemont High* Forest Whitaker, not Oscar-bait Forest Whitaker.


It's all fun and games until someone gets hurt: St. John goes *Wild*

SERIES DEBUT

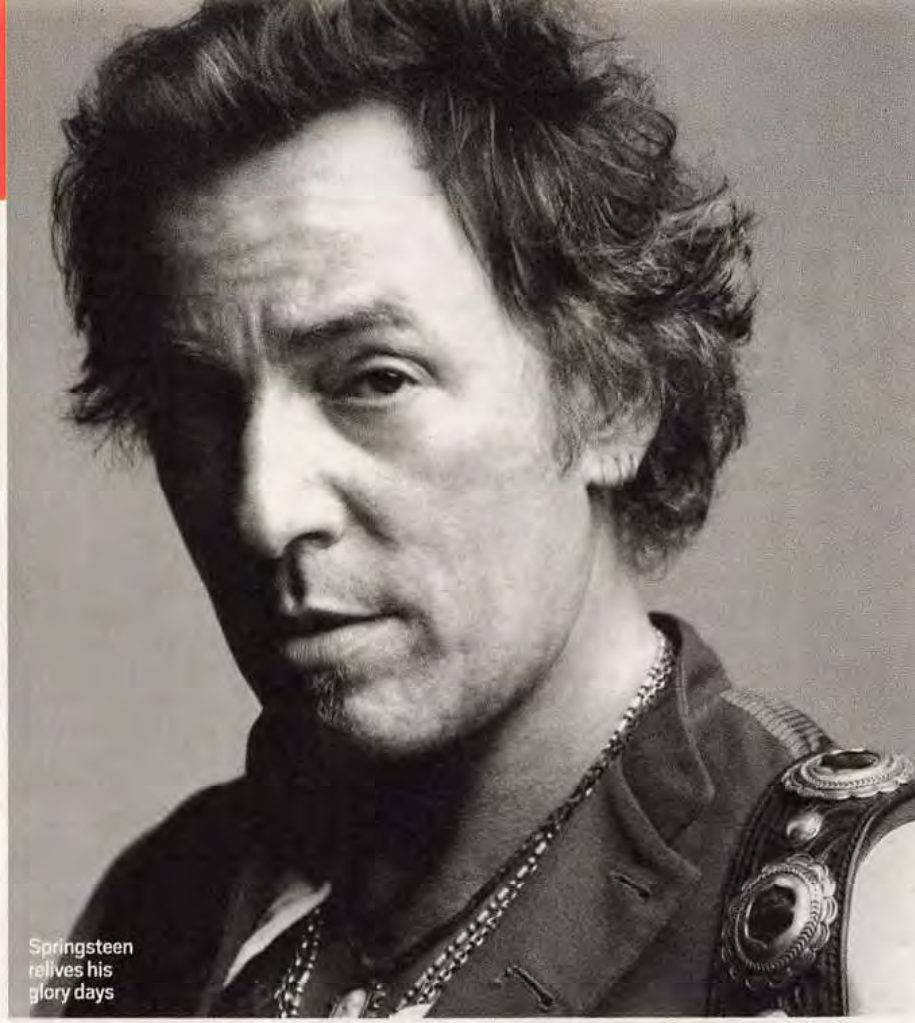
8–9PM
Life Is Wild The CW, TV-PG
D.W. Moffett stars as Danny, a vet who takes his family to live in a run-down South African game lodge in the hopes that they'll bond, or something. His rebellious teen stepson (Andrew St. John) is not amused, but Danny's plucky daughter (Leah Pipes) won't let the lodge's beyond-rustic charms (and warthog mascot, Ricky) get her down. Nothing new here; *Wild* is exactly what you would expect, in a *7th Heaven Goes to Africa* kind of way. Given that it's the only kid-friendly family drama left on broadcast TV, though, we say that's good enough. C+ —*Kristen Baldwin*

CHANDLER: JASON MERRITT/FILMMAGIC.COM; MOONLIGHT: CLIFF LIPSON; SUSAN SARANDON: JASON KEMPIN/FILMMAGIC.COM; LIFE IS WILD: DAVID BLOOMER

Bruce Almighty

Springsteen has us believing in his *Magic* with a thrilling return to vintage E Street.

BY CHRIS WILLMAN



Springsteen relives his glory days

Bruce Springsteen
Magic
(Columbia)
Rock

"Have a little faith/There's magic in the night," Bruce Springsteen sang on 1975's "Thunder Road." And for keeping the faith along the decades of back roads and stylistic detours, fans get their beautiful reward with *Magic*, his best record since *The River* in 1980. If such devotees assumed that the new album's title was a nod to rekindling the tattered romanticism of his salad days, they wouldn't be wrong. *Magic* marks only the second instance in more than two decades that Springsteen has made a studio CD with the E Street Band—and unlike the last reunion, he's not resisting their signature sound. Synths get a breather so Roy Bittan can return to those classic piano arpeggios; stirring key changes are again signaled by Clarence Clemons' sax solos; arena-friendly sing-alongs arrive in quick succession. If you were raised on this stuff, you may experience the giddy sensation that the world has been set aright again.

So why is Springsteen looking so damned surly on the cover? You didn't really expect a guy who devoted his recent career to sober fare like *Devils & Dust* to completely recalibrate his political serotonin levels, did you? In the tradition of *Born in the U.S.A.*, the celebrative group spirit is also a buffer for his dark materials. Springsteen's sour expression is merely the first hint that his CD's simplistic name is actually a double entendre. When the spooky title track finally arrives, he's playing the part of an enigmatic illusionist who seems a little too eager to "cut you in half, while you're smilin' ear to ear." It turns out Springsteen was also thinking of magic in the sense of smoke and mirrors, as favored by snake-oil salesmen and senators alike. You don't need a semiotics degree to guess that he's getting allegorical about leaders using the War on Terror to pull off some sleight of hand. That becomes clear in songs such as the soldiers' elegy "Gypsy Biker," which includes asides like "The speculators made their money on the blood you shed." *Note to self: World not set aright after all, despite reassuring Danny Federici organ fills.*

EW PICK

There is no trickery, however, to the naturalness of the band vibe here. On 2002's emotional but musically uneven *The Rising*, you could sense everyone straining with producer Brendan O'Brien to figure out how to bring the E Street Band into the 21st century—then finally arriving at what felt like a Springsteen "solo" album that happened to graft in the old gang. But *Magic*, also produced by O'Brien, gets it right from the start by mostly ditching recent rootsy flavorings for a com-

Backstory

+ Most of *Magic*'s songs are under four minutes, and the CD runs about a half hour shorter than 2002's *The Rising*. Just how much did Bruce self-edit? "Long Walk Home," which he'd previously premiered live (see it on YouTube), has been shorn of two verses.

SPRINGSTEEN: MARK SELIGER

pressed wall of sound. Sometimes that wall is gorgeously Spectorian, as with the glockenspiel-and-timpani-adorned pop stunners "Girls in Their Summer Clothes" and "Your Own Worst Enemy," which Springsteen delivers in a tender, rasp-free register barely heard since "Born to Run." Sometimes it's a garage wall, as on "Radio Nowhere," which gives axman (and ex-*Sopranos* hitman) Little Steven a cranky guitar blowout to play, unapologetically, on his garage-rock radio show.

If there's another "Glory Days" here—an inevitable concert standby that Bon Jovi will spend the next decade trying to rip off—it's "Livin' in the Future," an insanely jubilant celebration of denial as a coping mechanism. "None of this has happened yet," the gleeful choruses insist as Clemons wails on his horn and everyone joins in a "na-na-na-na-na" cheer. This, despite almost apocalyptic verses about how the singer's "faith's been torn asunder" by both his girl and his country. That's one of many *Magic* passages where it's intriguingly, purposely unclear whether Springsteen is describing wartime malaise and social dystopia or simply a bust-up between lovers.

No album could say more about the uncertain national mood of 2007, though that's only part of the set design. Springsteen's topical allusions are unspecific enough that *Magic* will remain enchanting after we get these American messes straightened out, in 5, 10, 50 years. Still, he does finally bring the war to the fore in the climactic "Devil's Arcade," and an album that began with Bruce yelling "Is there anybody alive out there?" ends on real matters of life and death. This big, slow-building ballad finds a young woman visiting her beloved in a military hospital, whispering promises of an idyllic suburban future and finally repeating the line "the beat of your heart" over and over, as if that very incantation could keep him tethered to the corporeal world. It's a moment that will break even a hardened rock fan's heart. But by then your resolve might already be melting from the realization that, three and a half decades into his career, Bruce Springsteen is back in the masterpiece business. **A**

>DOWNLOAD THIS: "Gypsy Biker"

In the Studio With...
MISSY ELLIOTT

The "Fly" girl gives EW a taste of her upcoming album. Figuring into the conversation: Timbaland, T-Pain, and Amy Winehouse's beehive.

After lying low following the release of 2005's *The Cookbook*, Missy Elliott has quietly returned with a cameo on "Let It Go," the sizzling new single she produced for R&B songbird Keyshia Cole. And come early next year, Elliott, 36, will drop her own, still-untitled album. "Hip-hop is my first love," she says. "I can do a record with George W. Bush, and I'm *still* gonna come out with a hip-hop record." With the disc partially completed, rap's leading lady took a rare break from recording to talk about her highly anticipated seventh CD. —*Margeaux Watson*

How does it feel to be working with Timbaland for the first time since *The Cookbook*?
Tim was [busy] getting slim last album. Now he's [fully] back in the picture, and it feels good. One night, we sat in the studio like, "We've been everywhere from using Japanese sounds to using birds. What do we do at this point?" So it's been a challenge, but I like that we push each other. Together, we're always gonna take it as far left as possible without losing people or having them thinking we're on drugs.

What does your new music with Timbaland sound like?
I love what he did with Justin Timberlake and Nelly Furtado. But for me, I want what I ain't heard, so we're coming from another place. But it's still going to be fun in the club.... Some things you can't even explain. Like, if I had to explain "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)" back in the day, I wouldn't have been able to.

Are you collaborating with any other producers?
I'm going to work with T-Pain. I love all of his records. What he does is genius, even using that [vocoder] thing on his voice. That's one of those things you hear and you're like, Why didn't I do that first?! And I went in the studio with Swizz Beatz. He always got those records that keep you in the club. I also worked with Nate "Danjahandz" Hills [Britney Spears' "Gimme More"]. I've worked with Danja since he was [just] Nate. I didn't even know his name was Danja until recently. Everybody was like, "Danja," and I'm like, "Who?" And then I seen him and I'm like, "Nate, you Danja?!"

Timbaland

Danjahandz

Swizz Beatz

T-Pain

How about cameos?
I can say Keyshia for sure; she owes me one. Keyshia gives you *raw*, like, "My life has been hell." There are a lot more people living that life than the good life, so they can relate to her. I'm quite sure T-Pain's gonna jump on the track he's producing. If I could get Jesus on it, I would. But God is always there.

Will a new look accompany the new sound?
I'm most definitely gonna be a lot more edgy with my look. You might see me come out with a beehive like Amy Winehouse. I did a bald head at one time, so who knows?

ELLIOTT: HEE CHUL KIM/WIREIMAGE.COM; TIMBALAND: MICHAEL LOCCISANO/FILMMAGIC.COM; HILLS: SOUL BROTHER/FILMMAGIC.COM; SWIZZ BEATZ: MARK VON HOLDEN/FILMMAGIC.COM; T-PAIN: ARNOLD TURNER/WIREIMAGE.COM

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Finding Emo

Still hooked on a doleful feeling, Dashboard fails to grow.

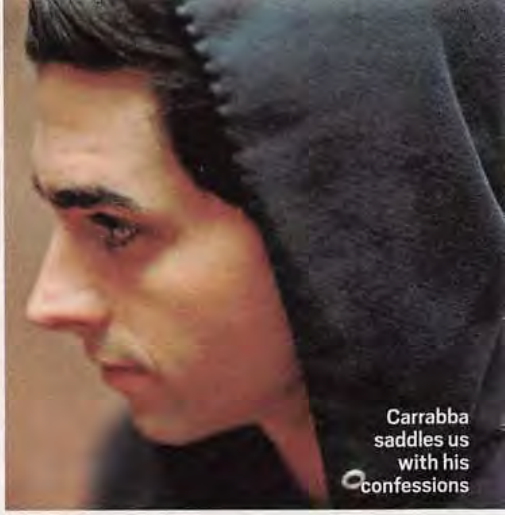
BY ADRIENNE DAY

Dashboard Confessional
The Shade of Poison Trees
(Vagrant)
Rock

It's disconcerting that after four albums, emo's dewy poster boy, Chris Carrabba (a.k.a. Dashboard Confessional), now 32, is still agape at the Medusa-like proportions of the women in his life, and beholden to the dimensions of his navel. *Poison Trees*, Carrabba's purported back-to-his-roots album ("redeem-o," anyone?), offers little evidence that he's matured along with his audience.

Poison Trees strikes bold notes with the acoustic-busker feel of Carrabba's first two albums, and songs like "Fever Dreams" and "Little Bombs" peak in ecstatic ripples of harmony. But it also seems like Carrabba is still fighting the same demons, while attempts to artistically shake things up by emulating his peers—borrowing from Kanye West on "Where There's Gold..." ("Where there's gold/There's a gold-digger") and swiping a guitar refrain from U2 on "The Rush"—could be perceived as callow. At times, you feel like a lab rat, pressing the same pedal again and again to tap Carrabba's overflowing emotional basket. **C+**

>DOWNLOAD THIS: "Fever Dreams"



Carrabba saddles us with his confessions

CHOICE CUTS

EW.COM EXCLUSIVE
THE CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA, "To Build a Home"
The aptly named Brits created a music moment on the *Grey's Anatomy* premiere with this dreamy track. *(ew.com/cinematicorchestra)*

SANTANA (FEAT. CHAD KROEGER), "Into the Night"
The guitar god joins forces with Nickelback's singer for an anthemic rocker. *(iTunes)*

50 CENT (FEAT. DIDDY AND JAY-Z), "I Get Money (Forbes 1, 2, 3 remix)"
Three titans of the game gather on Fiddy's latest track—a fierce, epic stomper. *(myspace.com/50cent)*
—Leah Greenblatt

Boyz N Da Hood
Back Up N Da Chevy
(Block Ent./Bad Boy South)
Rap

This Atlanta quartet's 2005 debut was most notable for the magnetic personality of de facto frontman Young Jeezy... who soon went solo. Their sophomore set has no shortage of replacements, including new member Gorilla Zoe, who raps in a gravelly, commanding baritone. Guest stars from Ice Cube to T-Pain keep the proceedings loose and lively. Yet the disc's energy comes to a halt whenever the three original Boyz get started on another yawn-worthy yarn about sex, drugs, and gunplay. **B–**
—Simon Vozick-Levinson

>DOWNLOAD THIS: "Everybody Know Me"

PJ Harvey
White Chalk
(Island)
Rock

Harvey has always been a bit of a rock & roll Sybil—manifesting alter egos from the howling blues banshee of 1993's *Rid of Me* to the torchy seductress of 2000's *Stories From the City, Stories From the Sea*. On the largely piano-based *Chalk*, she retreats into an odd little-girl-lost persona, singing almost entirely in a tremulous higher key that strangles the most powerful instrument in her arsenal: that voice. True, it's a woman's prerogative to change—we just wish she had chosen a more expressive path. **C** *—LG*

>DOWNLOAD THIS: "White Chalk"

J. Holiday
Back of My Lac'
(Music Line/Capitol)
R&B

This Washington, D.C.-based newcomer isn't coy about his biggest influence: "Come Here" finds him wistful about days of yore, "bumping and grinding on some R. Kelly s—." Sure enough, he does his best Kelly croon here, whether lending his creamy tenor to an oversexed slow jam ("Bed"), a tough-talking street lecture ("Thug Commandments"), or a tender love song ("Without You"). His spot-on impression makes for a pleasant listen—but until he develops a sound that's truly his own, there won't be much reason to celebrate this Holiday. **B–** *—SVL*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Bed"

Chuck Prophet
Soap and Water
(Yep Roc)
Rock

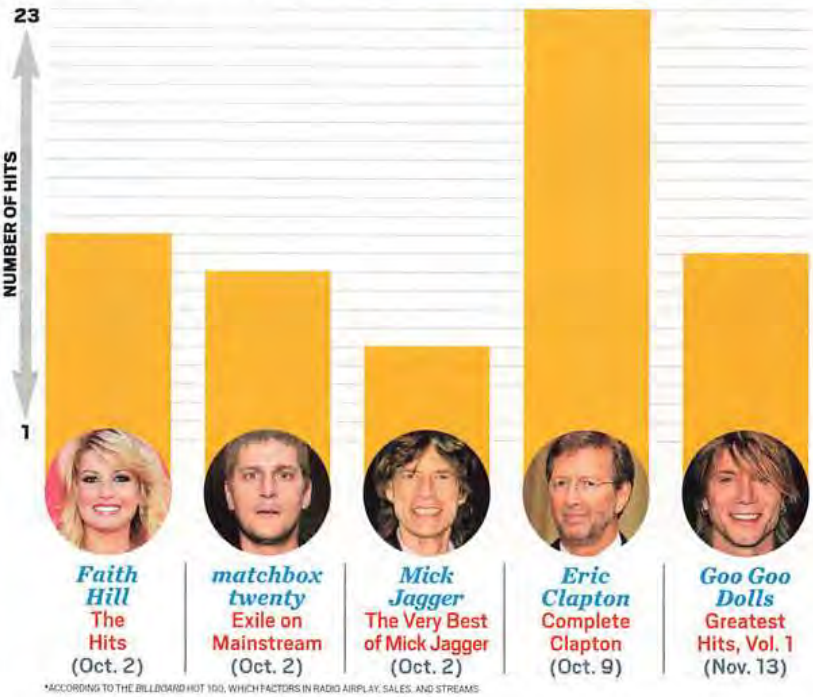
Though the guitarist's narco-blasted days in indie-rock band Green on Red are long behind him, there's still something elegantly and acerbically wasted about Prophet. This collection of roots rock is Stonesy loose, which is also to say that it's Stonesy tight. The lumbering "A Woman's Voice" aside, the tracks impress—from the sex-drenched "Freckle Song" to "Let's Do Something Wrong," where his Tom Petty-ish vocals are puckishly augmented by a kids' choir on the lyrics "Let's do something wrong/Let's do something stupid." **A–** *—Clark Collis*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Freckle Song"

Wayne Wonder
Foreva
(VP)
Reggae/R&B

Wonder scored his only U.S. hit with 2003's "No Letting Go" by layering honeyed melodies over an infectious dancehall riddim. The Jamaican singer blandly attempts to reclaim that crossover appeal with tunes like "For My Love," a run-of-the-mill reggae-rap collaboration with Trina. His vocals ultimately find a more natural frequency on subtler strings-and-synths offerings ("Love and Affection")—not to mention a host of randier paeans to romance ("Take It Off," "Exposed") that still manage to evoke a sweetness often lacking in R&B. **B** *—Chris Schonberger*
>DOWNLOAD THIS:
"Hotter Than Fire"

SIMPLY THE BEST-OF!

Just how great are this fall's greatest-hits CDs? We break down five notable releases by their number of actual hit singles.* Or lack thereof (sorry, Mick!). *—David Greenwald*



*ACCORDING TO THE *BILLBOARD* HOT 100, WHICH FACTORS IN RADIO AIRPLAY, SALES, AND STREAMS

THE CHART

HOT 100 SINGLES

1 KANYE WEST

Not just an album behemoth, West is also the Hot 100's top he-man. "Stronger" is his third No. 1 single.

THE TOP 20

		LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHART
1	**KANYE WEST** "Stronger"	2	8
2	**SOULJA BOY** "Crank That (Soulja Boy)"	1	10
3	**TIMBALAND FEAT. KERI HILSON** "The Way I Are" — *Timbaland and Hilson will perform this rising hit on the Oct. 9 episode of 'One Life to Live.' Subject-verb agreement in Llanview, Pa., will never be the same again.*	4	16
4	**FERGIE** "Big Girls Don't Cry"	3	22
5	**50 CENT FEAT. JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE AND TIMBALAND** "Ayo Technology"	19	6
6	**J. HOLIDAY** "Bed"	11	9
7	**KEYSHIA COLE FEAT. MISSY ELLIOTT AND LIL' KIM** "Let It Go"	10	13
8	**NICKELBACK** "Rockstar"	6	32
9	**PINK** "Who Knew" — *Released as the second single off Pink's 'I'm Not Dead' in May '06, "Who Knew" flopped; it was then re-released as the album's fourth single in June '07. Who knew it would only take 16 months to reach the top 10?*	14	15
10	**PLIES FEAT. T-PAIN** "Shawty"	9	14
11	**T-PAIN FEAT. AKON** "Bartender"	5	16
12	**MATCHBOX TWENTY** "How Far We've Come"	12	3
13	**PLAIN WHITE T'S** "Hey There Delilah"	7	25
14	**KANYE WEST FEAT. T-PAIN** "Good Life" — *With "Good Life" making such a splashy debut, West has two singles in the top 20 now. But wait—so does pseudo-archrival 50 Cent. Time to step up your game, Kenny Chesney!*	–	1
15	**ALICIA KEYS** "No One" — *Time waited for "No One," as the digital release of Alicia Keys' new single allowed it to leap up 56 chart spots in just one week.*	71	2
16	**COLBIE CAILLAT** "Bubbly"	21	12
17	**RIHANNA FEAT. JAY-Z** "Umbrella"	17	23
18	**JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** "LoveStoned"	20	11
19	**FABOLOUS FEAT. NE-YO** "Make Me Better"	13	17
20	**50 CENT** "I Get Money"	45	4

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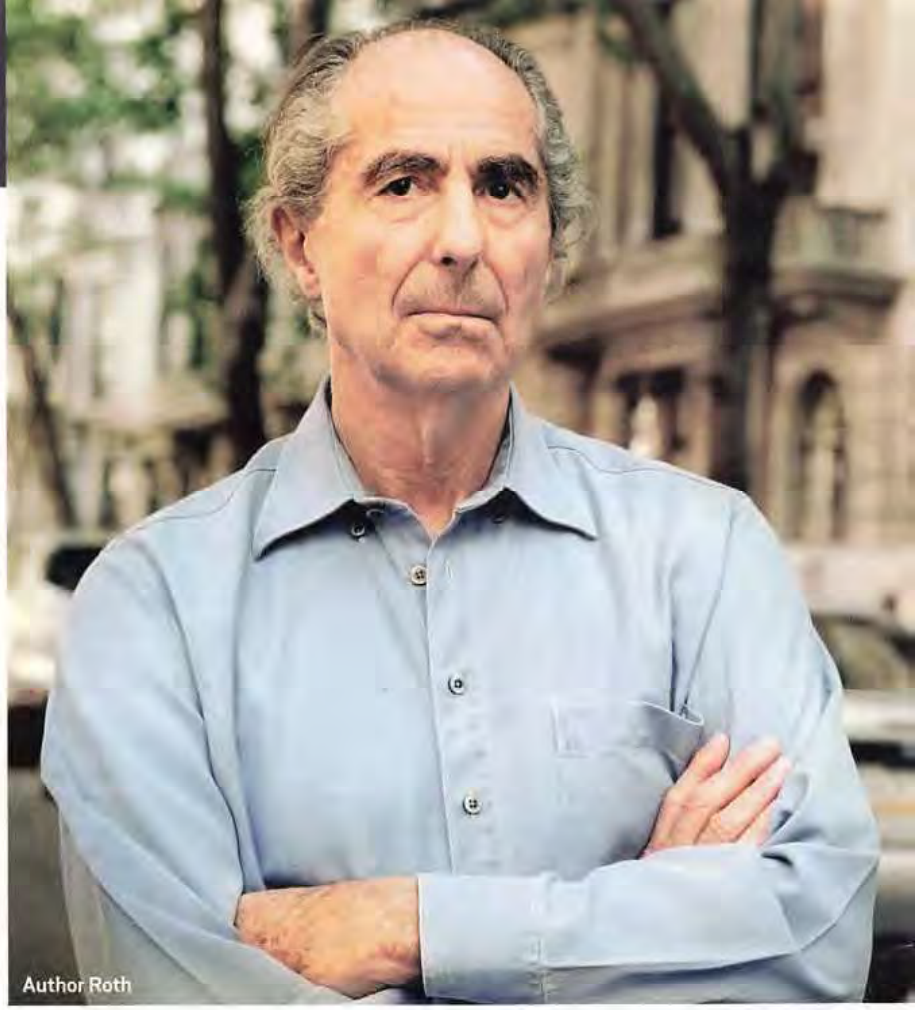
Nathan's Famous

In Philip Roth's elegiac novel, aged Nathan Zuckerman limps up for the ninth time.

BY BENJAMIN SVETKEY



Author Roth

Backstory

+ Philip Roth's fictional counterpart, Nathan Zuckerman, was first embodied on film by actor Mark Linn-Baker in the 1984 PBS movie *The Ghost Writer*.
+ In 2003's *The Human Stain*, Gary Sinise played Zuckerman (above).

EXIT GHOST
PHILIP
ROTH

Exit Ghost
Philip Roth
Novel

Lots of modern novelists flirt with fictional alter egos—Kurt Vonnegut named his Kilgore Trout, John Updike's was called Henry Bech—but Philip Roth is having an ongoing relationship with his. Nathan Zuckerman has appeared in Roth's writing for nearly 30 years, in works like *The Anatomy Lesson*, *American Pastoral*, and *The Human Stain*. Now, with this ninth Zuckerman book, the saga finally seems to be heading toward an end. In these pages, the tragicomic character is not looking well at all.

In his early 70s, with his memory failing (along with other body parts), Zuckerman is forced to end an 11-year reclusion in a Berkshires farmhouse and return to Manhattan for medical treatment. Like Rip Van Winkle waking from his slumber, he blinks in amazement at how the city of his youth has changed. "I couldn't have felt any more out of it...had I turned up on the corner of Sixth Avenue and West 54th with Rip's rusty gun in my hand and his ancient clothes on my back," he observes. But the ubiquity of cell phones and the shrinking of women's T-shirts aren't the only surprises for Zuckerman. In the elevator of his urologist's office, he spots a familiar-looking elderly woman with a half-shaved head from a recent brain tumor operation. "I did indeed know her," he says, eventually placing the face. "Her name was Amy Bellette. I'd met her only once. I'd never forgotten her."

That "once," of course, was in *The Ghost Writer*, the 1979 novel in which Roth formally introduced Zuckerman as an up-and-coming young author (who imagines a fetching European girl named Amy as a grown-up Anne Frank). Other characters from *The Ghost Writer* resurface as well, such as Nathan's long-dead Bernard Malamud-like mentor, a literary force so powerful he's still dictating criticism from the grave. You don't have to be the late E.I. Lonoff to see that Roth is bringing Zuckerman full circle, ending his story where it began. But don't expect closure quite yet. *Exit Ghost* stops just when it starts to get interesting, leaving plenty of plot points hanging for a sequel. Will Zuckerman succeed in preventing a sleazy journalist from staining Lonoff's legacy with a salacious biography? Will the experimental collagen-in-the-prostate injections restore the author's dignity (not to mention his sex life)? Will his leaky memory hold long enough for him to finish telling his own great tale?

Zuckerman may be losing it, but Roth is as lucid as ever. He's set up the first part of a masterful finale for his enduring creation, laying out the beginning of the end of Nathan Zuckerman. But it's going to take one more novel to finish him off. If we're lucky, maybe two. **B+**

ROTH: NANCY CRAMPTON; THE HUMAN STAIN: MIRAMAX/THE KOBAL COLLECTION

Shtick Figure

Shalom Auslander taps a Rothian vein recalling his Jewish upbringing.

BY JENNIFER REESE

Foreskin's Lament
Shalom Auslander
Memoir

Once upon a time, Philip Roth was reviled for his filthy imagination, manic accounts of masturbation, and unflattering depictions of Jews. But even at his most rebellious, *Portnoy*-era Roth couldn't hold a candle to Shalom Auslander. Both inspired and unnerved by the birth of his first child, Auslander took a good long look at his upbringing in an oppressive Orthodox Jewish community. His memoir, *Foreskin's Lament*, plays the spectacle for laughs, but beneath the extremely funny shtick is one ferociously angry book.

According to Auslander, his volatile father regularly guzzled Manischewitz and flew into violent rages, while his doleful mother sighed and fussed about keeping kosher. Their lives were governed by joyless rabbis who introduced Auslander to the Hebrew God, "an abusive, belligerent god, a god who awoke millennia ago on the wrong side of the firmament and still hasn't cheered up."

God's pet peeves become Auslander's favorite pastimes: He binges on nonkosher Slim Jims and watches Christy Canyon skin flicks. Every transgression inspires fears of retribution, crescendoing in Auslander's semicomic crisis over whether to circumcise his newborn son. Auslander overuses some of his material; there are about a dozen too many mediocre masturbation jokes. He's a gifted writer digging for something deep and rich in his problematic past, but he's never going to find it lunging after every sophomoric laugh. **B+**

Auslander: the mensch show

"Even at his most rebellious, *Portnoy*-era Roth couldn't hold a candle to Shalom Auslander."

What's New in...Chick Lit

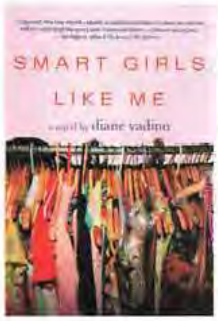
DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENTS

ODD MOM OUT

Jane Porter *(paperback)* Fiercely independent graphic designer/single mom Marta doesn't fit in among the perfectly highlighted, manicured, and gym-toned women in her luxe Seattle suburb. **Source of Angst** Marta's 9-year-old daughter is horrified that Marta prefers motorcycle boots to kitten heels. **Lowdown** Though the outcome of Marta's romance with a rugged local is never in question, her musings on balancing work, life, and love ring true. **B+** *—Clarissa Cruz*

THE GODMOTHER

Carrie Adams This debut follows Tessa King, a single thirtysomething, and her married-with-children friends. **Source of Angst** Tessa's oldest godson is turning into a delinquent teen. Her youngest, twin baby boys, are saddled with a cokehead dad. And another beloved couple fail to produce the child—and godchild for Tess—they all desperately want. **Lowdown** Despite some slapsticky misunderstandings, Adams keeps the story fresh and gratifyingly untidy. **A–** *—Leah Greenblatt*



SMART GIRLS LIKE ME

Diane Vadino As Y2K looms, NYC fashion writer Betsy obsesses over two impending disasters she can't control: the end of the world and her best friend's wedding. **Source of Angst** Betsy feels trapped, both inside her head and the walk-in closet that is her bedroom. Plus, she frets about her hot but mentally vacant boyfriend. **Lowdown** A raw and honest glimpse of single life. The witty, poignant Vadino writes exactly how smart girls think. **A–** *—Annie Barrett*

BLOOD IS THE NEW BLACK

Valerie Stivers *(paperback)* Innocent young Kate takes a job at a style magazine staffed by bloodsucking fashionistas (literally). **Source of Angst** Just where is Kate's long-gone mother? Why do industry people keep showing up dead? Does it have anything to do with Lillian, her preternaturally pale, sharp-incisored boss? **Lowdown** It's all pretty silly, and Stivers has a good sense of fun—even if *Blood*'s not quite worth its weight in garlic and wooden stakes. **B** *—LG*

HAIR AND GROOMING: ANGELA HUFF/MARC EDWARD INC., MAKEUP: DAVE TIBELLA/MARK EDWARD INC.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GRANT DELIN

The Florist's Daughter

Patricia Hampl

Memoir

In her lovely, elliptical memoir of family and loss, Hampl brings her late mother and father back to life—then gently lays them to rest again. "Nothing is harder to grasp than the relentlessly modest life," she writes. Then she does just that, conjuring not just her parents' modesty but everything that was extraordinary and mysterious about them, from her astringent mother's sense of adventure to the late-in-life revelations of her mild-mannered father, a St. Paul florist who brought "an aura of quiet, to the flowers he arranged." This beautiful bouquet of a book commemorates both. **A–** *—JR*

The Air We Breathe

Andrea Barrett

Novel

Barrett (*Ship Fever*) again fuses history and science in her new novel, about tuberculosis patients seeking treatment in the fictional Adirondack town of Tamarack Lake. The year is 1916, and the U.S. is on the verge of entering the Great War. But for these isolated patients—many of them Eastern European immigrants—the relatively small dramas that occur within this remote community deliver the greater impact. Though *Air* takes a while to get going, Barrett eloquently blends scientific elements like TB and chemistry with her diverse characters' hopes and heartbreaks to bring the book to crackling life. **B+** *—Allyssa Lee*

An Absolute Gentleman

R.M. Kinder

Debut Novel

Arthur Blume, the "gentleman" narrator of this blade-sharp debut, is an urbane, 50ish English prof with a taste for Victorian furniture and nature essays. Yet unbeknownst to faculty and students at his "backwater" Missouri university, his CV omits a trail of female corpses. As Blume befriends a 70ish aspiring poet and beds a pill-popping female colleague, Kinder—who based Blume on a real-life serial killer—veers into some overfamiliar Southern gothic terrain. At its best, though, Kinder's prose adroitly plumbs the inner life of an intellectual sociopath who brings equal precision to writing and killing. **B+** *—Ben Spier*

Bowl of Cherries

Millard Kaufman

Debut Novel

EW PICK

Judd Breslau is a prodigy of seriously unrealized promise. At 14, he and his poet mom are abandoned by his dad, an emotionally mingy, mediocre academic. A year later, he's kicked out of Yale. Soon, he finds himself in a minor province of war-torn Iraq in a prison built primarily of human excrement, awaiting execution. How he gets there is a picaresque of inexhaustible comic invention by debut novelist Kaufman, whose dexterous prose swims with Judd's delightfully precocious turns of phrase. One fave: "The room was permeated with the lingering stench of old and laminated farts." **A** *—Adam B. Vary*

BOOKMARK BIO

AGE 90

HOME Los Angeles

FROM WAR...
Kaufman fought as a Marine on Guadalcanal and Okinawa in WWII.

...TO HOLLYWOOD
He earned two screenwriting Oscar nods, for 1953's *Take the High Ground!* and '55's *Bad Day at Black Rock*. He also co-created Mr. Magoo (modeled, he says, on his uncle).

...TO SHELVES
Cherries landed at McSweeney's after his son assured him of the hip publisher's bona fides.

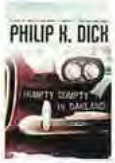
Kaufman

KAUFMAN: MATT LEUNG

The Terror Dream
Susan Faludi
Nonfiction

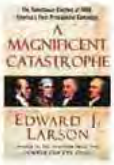
Faludi's provocative deconstruction of the American response to 9/11 begins with fairly rote feminist analysis: In a crisis, our culture glorified he-man firefighters and wept for helpless New Jersey widows; we reelected a tough-talking president, while demonizing outspoken women like Susan Sontag. So far, so predictable. But in the book's stunning second half, Faludi traces our knee-jerk regression to a powerful myth written in the nation's earliest days, when Americans lived under constant threat of Indian attack. Whether you resist her argument or buy it wholesale, you'll find yourself thinking harder about the social fallout of 9/11. **A–** *—JR*

Humpty Dumpty in Oakland
Philip K. Dick
Novel



Written around 1960, this grim portrait of a luckless used-car salesman and his bigoted landlord in Oakland seems at first to share little with the hallucinatory sci-fi works for which Dick is best known. But both men slip into paranoid spirals that will be familiar to any fan of Dick's later masterpieces. Is the slick acquaintance offering them financial advice a well-meaning entrepreneur, an opportunistic con man—or the head of an all-powerful conspiracy? The characters' descent into madness offers a fascinating glimpse into how Dick's uniquely warped perspective evolved. **A**
—Simon Vozick-Levinson

A Magnificent Catastrophe
Edward J. Larson
Nonfiction



The 1800 presidential election shattered the unity of the American revolutionary spirit, transforming patriots into bitter partisans. Larson captures the Founders not on Olympus, but in the Rovian political mud, as incumbent Federalist prez John Adams and Republican Thomas Jefferson exchanged Swift-boat-like accusations of godlessness and tyranny. Self-promoting Republican Aaron Burr upended the system when he tied Jefferson for victory—tempting Federalists like Alexander Hamilton to nearly strangle the American Experiment in its cradle. So much for the good ol' days. **A–** *—Jeff Labrecque*

REEL LIT
Should you head to the multiplex or just hit the books?

1. Into the Wild
Jon Krakauer *(paperback)* Writer-director Sean Penn adds some cinematic razzle-dazzle (slo-mo shots, split screen, etc.) but stays relatively close to the facts in Krakauer's 1996 biography of Chris McCandless, a young man who gave up a cushy suburban life to experience the wilderness. **Last Word** Good as Penn's film is, the book's unsentimental tone better fits the heart-wrenching story. *—Adam Markovitz*

2. The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford
Ron Hansen *(paperback)* Despite losing characters like the Younger brothers (Jesse's old partners in crime), Andrew Dominik's screenplay is remarkably faithful to Hansen's 1983 novel in both story and style—it pulls chunks of dialogue straight from the page. **Last Word** Even with a 160-minute running time, the movie can't match the depth and detail of the novel. *—AM*

3. The Jane Austen Book Club
Karen Joy Fowler *(paperback)* Auteur Robin Swicord retains Fowler's endearing premise—a group of Californians gather to read Austen's six novels as a way to escape their own love lives—but trims a lot of the characters' backstory (e.g., dog-obsessed Jocelyn received her first pup from a high school beau). **Last Word** Though the film charms, the book's witty yet delicate tone is far more engaging. *—Lindsay Soll*

THE CHARTS

HARDCOVER BEST-SELLERS

1 **YOU'VE BEEN WARNED**

Perennial best-seller James Patterson, this time joined by Howard Roughan, topples Harry Potter from his perch atop the fiction list.

FICTION TOP 10

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	**YOU'VE BEEN WARNED** James Patterson and Howard Roughan *This is the second thriller teaming Patterson and Roughan, following 2005's 'Honeymoon.' There are one million copies in print.*	1
2	**HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS** J.K. Rowling	9
3	**A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS** Khaled Hosseini	17
4	**PONTOON** Garrison Keillor *NPR mainstay Keillor returns to beloved Lake Wobegon in his new novel. After two trips to press, there are 175,000 copies out.*	1
5	**THE WHEEL OF DARKNESS** Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child	3
6	**BONES TO ASHES** Kathy Reichs	3
7	**THE QUICKIE** James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge	11
8	**DARK POSSESSION** Christine Feehan	3
9	**THE ELVES OF CINTRA** Terry Brooks	3
10	**GARDEN SPELLS** Sarah Addison Allen	2

NONFICTION TOP 10

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	**GIVING** Bill Clinton	2
2	**THE SECRET** Rhonda Byrne	37
3	**POWER TO THE PEOPLE** Laura Ingraham	1
4	**THE WEIGHT LOSS CURE "THEY" DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT** Kevin Trudeau	15
5	**QUIET STRENGTH** Tony Dungy with Nathan Whitaker	10
6	**THE DANGEROUS BOOK FOR BOYS** Conn and Hal Iggulden	20
7	**THE WAR** Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns *The companion to Ken Burns' landmark 1990 PBS documentary series 'The Civil War' sold more than one million copies. The book accompanying his new WWII film has 550,000 copies out so far—before any pledge drives.*	1
8	**IF I DID IT** The Goldman Family	1
9	**LONE SURVIVOR** Marcus Luttrell with Patrick Robinson	14
10	**MOTHER TERESA** Mother Teresa and Brian Kolodiejchuk	2

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INTO THE WILD: CHUCK ZLOTNICK; THE ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES BY THE COWARD ROBERT FORD: KIMBERLY FRENCH; THE JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB: RALPH NELSON

THE GLUTTON

GONE IN 60 MINUTES

By Dalton Ross

For a weekly, expanded version of The Glutton and a video version of The Five, or to talk back to Dalton, go to ew.com/glutton

Gentlemen, start your engines! Fantastic. Now, you there—please shut your engine off, vacate the car, push it off the track, and turn in your keys. Don't feel so bad. You've actually *won* this race—the race to be the first cancellation of the new TV season! Actually, on second thought, maybe you should feel bad.

Yes, it's that time of year, when scores of programs debut on network schedules. After months of hard work, hype, and continually looped promos (thanks, CBS, for assaulting me with "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" 3,274 times in your weepy *Kid Nation* spots, igniting both tears *and* fears on my end), the latest offerings are finally here. But for how long? Predicting the fall season's first casualty has become an irresistible spectator sport—but it's not so easy. There are several elements to consider. The first, of course, is whether the program features cavemen characters inspired by an already played-out advertising campaign. Such programs have a remarkably poor track record. This also speaks to the much broader issue of quality: Sometimes a show is simply so bad, you know it is not long for this world (ABC's *Big Shots*, I'm now looking your way). However, well-pedigreed dramas often get the hook just as easily. Back in 1999, Fox's *Harsh Realm* seemed to have everything going for it: It was an intriguing *Matrix*-like look at life in a virtual world, came from red-hot *X-Files* creator Chris Carter, and, perhaps most important, featured Terry O'Quinn rocking a pencil-thin mustache. No matter. It was dumped after three episodes.

"Predicting the fall season's first casualty has become an irresistible spectator sport."

Often it comes down to two other factors—time-slot competition and whether the network has something ready to put on in its place. The first one causes me to wonder if NBC's *Life* could be dead on arrival. It's a quirky take on a fruit-obsessed cop who was wrongly convicted and spent time in the pen. It's also going up against CBS' established *CSI: NY* and ABC's camptastic attention-grabbing *Dirty Sexy Money*. And as for the second point...oh, wait, I feel a song coming on. And it goes a little something like this: *"Oh, 'Viva Laughlin,' you thought you were smart/Delaying your debut with an Oct. 18 start/So your musical drama wouldn't be the first to go/But with Melanie Griffith singing Blondie songs, I fear for your show."* Another reason *Laughlin* may be this fall's first dead show walking—other than its featuring, you know, people breaking into song—is that CBS has a new season of *The Amazing Race* all wrapped and waiting in the wings. (I can already sense Phil Keoghan arching his eyebrow in anticipation.)

CBS certainly didn't exhibit patience last year with its expensive heist drama *Smith* (pulled after three airings), but when it comes to itchy trigger fingers, no one compares to Fox. The network is notorious for pulling programs after ridiculously brief runs and replacing them with fare like *Former Child Stars vs. Mentally Challenged Hyenas II: Who's Laughing Now?* Fox's history leads us to the most ironic part about this entire column—the fact that the first ax of the season may very well have already fallen by the time you read this. Offering a huge extended middle finger to the first-cancellation-of-the-season gods, Fox debuted reality show *Nashville* two weeks early—on Sept. 14. Bold. Daring. Stupid. The show attracted fewer than 3 million viewers, making it the odds-on favorite to get a premature pink slip. Whichever show goes first, give all these nominees a big round of applause. It may be the last one they hear. ■

THE FIVE

The Five Reality Shows I'm Most Embarrassed to Say That I Watched From Beginning to End

1. The Littlest Groom
I don't know what was smaller—the size of the contestants or my self-respect after sitting through Fox's mini-*Bachelor* travesty.

2. The Player
As far as I can tell, the point of this UPN joke was for a lady to pick out which womanizer she wanted to go out with and have cheat on her.

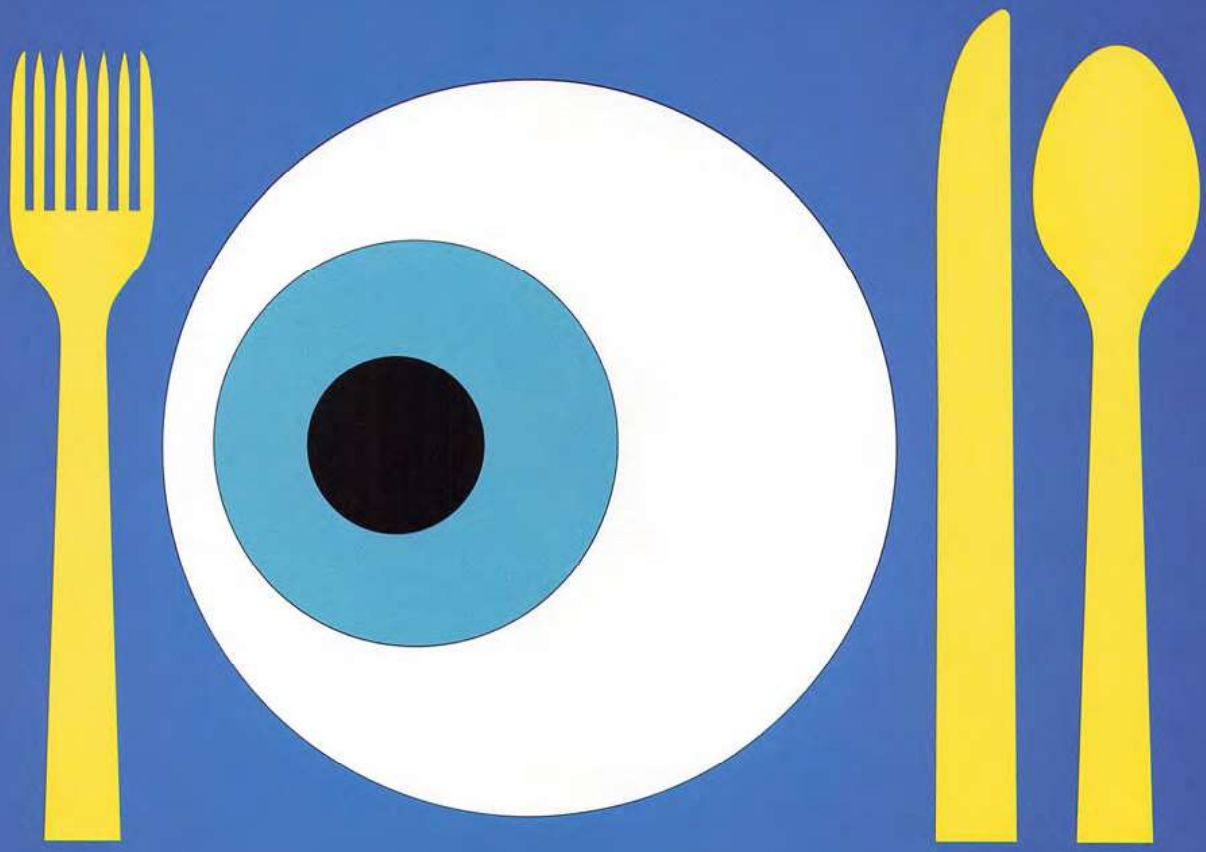
3. Mr. Personality
All the suitors in Fox's bizarre dating show were forced to wear idiotic masks. Maybe I should be as well for admitting to watching it.

4. Celebrity Mole Yucatan
I still wake up in a cold sweat with nightmares of crazy Corbin Bernsen in his sailor hat on ABC. Damn you, Yucatan!

5. Forever Eden
Fox's pale copycat of their far superior *Paradise Hotel* featured one woman's assertion that "I've never seen a black guy's feet before."

THE LITTLEST GROOM, MR. PERSONALITY, FOREVER EDEN, FOX; THE PLAYER, UPN/LANDOV; CELEBRITY MOLE YUCATAN, ABC PHOTO ARCHIVE

ILLUSTRATION BY QUICKHONEY



You need another television channel like you need a fork in the eye.

Last time we looked, there were over 300 television channels already out there. And that's plenty. But the way we look at it, Channel 1 is a "channel" in name only. Because your average TV channel can't give you an abs workout at exactly 7:42 a.m. Or become an instant karaoke machine if your friends drop by. Or let you watch hundreds of free movies whenever you want. Yes, this is a channel like no other. This is your On Demand channel from Comcast Digital Cable. And maybe you don't need it. But you'll really, really want it.

ch 1 On Demand from Comcast

It's Comcastic!

Not available in all areas. Comcast Digital Cable service subscription required. Call Comcast for details and restrictions.

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Bad to the meticulously engineered bone.

INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW 2008 C-CLASS.

Why did we road-test the all-new C-Class the equivalent of 600 times around the world, 14 million miles? Why did we redline the engine for over 30,000 miles? And why did we equip it with a lowered, sport-tuned suspension, AMG bodystyling and 17" staggered-width alloy wheels, all standard?* Because we promised you a Mercedes-Benz. That's why.

With a body constructed from over 70% high-strength steel, the new C-Class is solid to the core. But once behind the wheel, things quickly heat up, thanks to a 228-horsepower V-6 engine that can accelerate from 0 to 60 in 7.1 seconds** and a braking system capable of stopping you in just four.† Lastly, to keep all that power firmly within your grasp, we gave it AGILITY CONTROL suspension* to handle even the most challenging corners.

Get behind the wheel of a new C-Class and experience for yourself just how good, bad can be.

THE C-CLASS. *When designing it, our engineers didn't hold back. Starting at $31,975.*††

Unlike any other.

Mercedes-Benz

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*Only available on C-Class Sport Sedans. **Stated rates of acceleration are based on manufacturer's track results and may vary depending on model, environmental and road surface conditions, driving style, elevation and vehicle load. †Skid pad test results. Actual braking distances vary depending on surface, tire conditions and brake maintenance system. ††MSRP for a 2008 C 300 Sport Sedan includes transp. charge. Excludes all options, taxes, title, regis. and dealer prep. 2008 C 300 Sport shown at $36,435 includes optional Obsidian Black metallic paint, Panorama Roof and Premium 2 Package. Options, model availability and actual dealer price may vary. See dealer for details.

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